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“THE WOODLAND CHOIR”



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HUNTING TOURS:

DESCRIPTIVE OF

VARIOUS FASHIONABLE COUNTRIES
AND ESTABLISHMENTS,

WITH

ANECDOTES OF MASTERS OF HOUNDS AND OTHERS
CONNECTED WITH FOXHUNTING.

BY "CECIL."



LONDON:
SAUNDERS, OTLEY, AND CO.,
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1864

TO THE RIGHT HONOURABLE
THE EARL OF YARBOROUGH.

My LORD,

The very great length of time—exceeding a century and a half—that foxhounds have been kept without intermission by your Lordship's ancestors; the fondness for the chase evinced by yourself, together with the co-operation of a most wealthy, influential tenantry, and that of other members of the Brocklesby Hunt, has prompted me to solicit the honour of commending my work to your Lordship's kind patronage.

The gracious response of the Countess of Yarborough to the request of the gentlemen connected with the Brocklesby Hunt, for permission to offer for her Ladyship's acceptance a portrait of herself in hunting costume, conveys the assurance that foxhunting will continue to flourish at Brocklesby for even a longer period than it has hitherto done.

I cannot close this inadequate appeal to your Lordship's favour without an apology for adopting my usual *nom de plume*, but as it is known better in hunting circles than my own name, and as I am personally recognised by the signature,

I have the honour to be,

My Lord,

Your most humble and devoted servant,

“ CECIL.”

February, 1864.

C O N T E N T S .

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CHAPTER	PAGE
I.—'The Albrighton Country and Mr. Stubbs' Hounds	1
II.—The Atherstone Country and Lord Curzon's Hounds	17
III.—The old Berkshire Hounds and Country	40
IV.—The Burton Country and Lord Henry Bentinck's Hounds	61
V.—The Cotswold Hounds and Country	97
VI.—A Day on the Flags in 1862	119
VII.—The Cottesmore Country and Sir John Trollope's Hounds	125
VIII.—The Honourable George Fitzwilliam's Hounds and Country	141
IX.—Herefordshire Hounds and Country	160
X.—The Heythrop Hounds and Country	171
XI.—The Hoar Cross Country and Mr. Meynell Ingram's Hounds	193
XII.—The Ludlow Hounds and Country	209
XIII.—The Quorn Country and Lord Stamford's Hounds—their Opening Day	224

CHAPTER	PAGE
XIV.—Mr. Tailby's Country and his Hounds	265
XV.—The Duke of Rutland's Hounds and Country	284
XVI.—The Warwickshire Country and Hounds	315
XVII.—The North Warwickshire Country and Mr. Baker's Hounds	333
XVIII.—The Worcestershire Country and Colonel Clowes' Hounds	357
XIX.—The Vale of White Horse Country and Mr. Croome's Hounds	381
XX.—The Earl of Yarborough's Hounds and Country	397

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DIRECTIONS TO THE BINDER.

“The Woodland Choir”—to face Title.

“Hark to Holla”—to face page 224.

HUNTING TOURS.

CHAPTER I.

THE ALBRIGHTON COUNTRY AND MR. STUBBS' HOUNDS.

Taking a bird's-eye view of this country, the immense number of splendid mansions which appear in all directions proclaim most unequivocally the enormous wealth of the inhabitants. Many of these edifices have risen within a brief space of time, and they afford a happy confirmation of the successful enterprises which have led to their construction. The opulent proprietors of these princely domains are the chief contributors to the expenses of the Albrighton Hounds, and if their aggregate wealth was to be com-

pared with that of the subscribers to any other hunt, I question whether these gentlemen would not have it in their power to command the larger amount of specie. It is, indeed, a charming coincidence, conveying in the most emphatic terms the high repute in which the most exciting and invigorating of all the sports in the world is held by this powerful class of Her Majesty's liege subjects. This, too, affords an excellent example of the delightful grouping which the "noble science" promotes. It is not now, as in days of yore, when extensive landed proprietors and a very limited number of country gentlemen were the only persons who enjoyed the sport of foxhunting; but we may traverse England throughout and find representatives of every class participating in the gay scene at the covert side, and even the butty collier is delighted to emerge from his subterranean labours, and cheer his heart with the enlivening melody of hound and horn. There is no other kingdom in the world that has associated with it any description of national recreation imparting character to the inhabitants, as foxhunting does to the sons of Great Britain.

The Albrighton country is extensive and somewhat singularly circumstanced. It extends more than thirty-five miles in length, taking the vicinity of Newport as the extreme northern point, nearly to Bromsgrove on the south. The river Severn flows from Coalbrook Dale to Bewdley, and forms the south-western boundary, while on the east and south-east of Wolverhampton a line of demarcation is emphatically determined by the vast coal and iron fields from whence proceed the enormous amount of hidden treasures which render the neighbourhood so remarkable for its wealth. Looking at it with a view to sport, it presents many difficulties to hounds and their masters. There are not any large holding woodlands, as in many hunts, so useful for cub-hunting, where hounds may be taken early in the autumn, to perform their rehearsals ere they appear before the scrutinising eyes of the public; that preliminary proceeding must, therefore, be procrastinated till after the harvest is secured, and there is a great quantity of riot to contend with. The most extensive woodlands are those at Aerley, whence with some intervening space there is a chain of

coverts extending to the banks of the Severn. There are some excellent coverts on the estate of the Earl of Stamford and Warrington, at Enville, where it is scarcely necessary to remark the foxes are preserved with the strictest attention; indeed, the same consideration is observed by the landed proprietors throughout the hunt. The Sheriff Hales woods on the Duke of Sutherland's Lilleshall estate abound with foxes which are difficult to kill, and his grace issues most unmistakable orders for their safety. This part of the country is much renowned for sport. The woods on the Chillington estate have, from time immemorial, been famed as certain finds, though the late highly-esteemed and worthy "Squire" was wont to request the hounds might not disturb them till after the coverts had been shot, a custom his brother and successor, Mr. Walter Gifford, does not see in the same light. A somewhat remarkable circumstance appertains to a covert near Shifnal, called the Lizard. Very many years ago it was a noted place for sport; after which, during a great length of time, the foxes found there scarcely ever afforded a run. This I can vouch for, having

seen it drawn so very many times without any sport worth naming. Of late years the success of this covert seems to have been restored, and some of the best runs have been from this place. The cause, I think, may be thus explained:—After the primitive celebrity had been established, the country, for several years, was not regularly hunted, and no doubt the good old breed of foxes was ignominiously destroyed. Subsequently, as I have good reason to believe, some French foxes were turned down which were a degenerate race. Time, and the natural intercourse of the species, has improved their habits and constitutions, and they have gained the character of their predecessors. That the breeds of foxes are susceptible to hereditary influences I entertain not the slightest doubt. It was, I remember, too, a notoriously bad scenting covert, but on making that remark to Mr. Stubbs, he replied that he had not found it so. I saw it drawn by his hounds during my visit when there was no fox at home to enable me to form an opinion; but I observed it was very much lighter in the bottom than formerly, conse-

quently hounds have a better chance of driving their foxes.

The earliest records of hunting in this locality from which I have been able to obtain any conclusive data are to the effect that the late Mr. George Forrester, of Willey Park, hunted a portion of it in the vicinity of Bridgnorth, somewhat about the termination of the last century. The late Earl of Stamford and Warrington kept hounds a few seasons, but I believe his lordship hunted a part of Leicestershire, travelling his hounds to either country to suit convenience. Sir Richard Pulestone visited the Shifnal side occasionally, and the Worcestershire confines were resorted to by the hounds kept in that county. Mr. Stubbs, the grandfather of the present worthy master, kept a pack of harriers at Beckbury, indulging them now and then with a taste of fox. My own recollection serves me to trace the time when Mr. Mytton, having a relay of hacks, would ride from Halston, some forty miles, to hunt his hounds, at that time kennelled at Ivetsey Bank, and after a hard day's work return home in the same manner. Masters of hounds were accustomed in those days to

undergo fatigues which the present generation would be reluctant to attempt. This was prior to the year 1823, when Sir Bellingham Graham, having resigned the mastership of the Quorn country, entered upon this. Coming from that aristocratic region, it is needless to expatiate on the quality of the hounds, or the magnificence of the establishment; everything appertaining thereto was of the highest order, but their perfections were not long confined to this country. The Shropshire men invited Sir Bellingham to divide his favours; thus the two countries were alternately without hounds. Two seasons afterwards, Mr. Boycott was installed in office, when boundaries were determined upon, and from that period it has been regularly hunted. One of the principal promoters of this arrangement, and one to whom the members of this hunt are most deeply indebted, is their popular honorary secretary, Mr. William Grazebrooke, who, from the period of Sir Bellingham Graham's commencement, has exerted every influence calculated to promote the welfare of fox-hunting. Enjoying the friendship of the higher circles and the respect of all classes,

Mr. Grazebooke has been the means, on more than one occasion, of preventing a blank in the sport of the neighbourhood. Ever ready with facetious pleasantries and abounding in that affability which commands esteem, he has always some happy jokes ready to amuse, and good-humouredly applies them more frequently to himself than to others. An instance of this occurred last winter. Much to the regret of his companions in the field, he had rather a severe fall, by which he was stunned. The accident was observed by Mr. Phillips, the coroner for the county, who hastened to his assistance, and he soon recovered. Shortly afterwards a sympathising friend inquired the nature of the accident, and if he felt any ill effects? "Not much the matter," was the reply, "only a little surprised at finding the coroner sitting over me before I was dead." At the expiration of six years, Mr. Boycott relinquished his charge, and Mr. Walter Gifford came into office, when kennels were built at Albrighton, from which circumstance the name of the hunt originated. These kennels, unfortunately, were very unhealthy, and kennel lameness was a constant source

of annoyance. Another site was selected, which, although a decided improvement, was certainly not a perfect remedy. Sir Thomas Boughey came forward about five years afterwards, and on removing the hounds to Aqualate, where fresh kennels were made use of, the lameness ceased, unless it might be in some inveterate old-established cases. This affords very convincing evidence of the cause, and at the same time points out the remedy. Sir Thomas Boughey only kept the hounds three seasons, when Mr. Grazebrooke's best efforts were called into requisition to find a successor. This was eventually accomplished under the auspices of a committee, with Mr. Thomas Holyoake as master, who, in consequence of Sir Thomas having sold his hounds, had to form a new pack. The late Duke of Cleveland's pack, which had gained great distinction under the experienced hand of his grace when bearing the title of Lord Darlington, was in the market. From the high character formerly attached to them, the most sanguine expectations were entertained, and several lots were purchased, nine couples of which only were put forward. They were much out of condition, and re-

quired some time to bring them about. The dispersion of these hounds in lots affords an instance among many others of the sad havoc occasioned when an established pack becomes disbanded. Many of the most celebrated often fail to distinguish themselves among fresh associates ; and those of moderately fair pretensions commonly invoke disappointment, and condemnation is the consequence.

Mr. Holyoake continued the mastership till 1848, when the Earl of Stamford and War-rington, much to the satisfaction of all good sportsmen in the neighbourhood, under-took to hunt the country, and engaged William Staples as huntsman ; but, greatly to the regret and disappointment of the neighbour-hood, at the end of the first season, inti-mated his intention to resign, and the Hon. Arthur Wrottesley became his successor, re-taining Staples in his former appointment. Mr. Wrottesley presided till 1852, at which period Mr. Hellier was installed, but he only continued two seasons. Mr. Baker had them a moiety of that time, when North War-wickshire offering great attractions, a vacancy occurred, and the Earl of Stamford and War-rington took the country a second time, but

at the end of the season, the Quorn being open, his lordship made way for Mr. Stubbs. This gentleman evidently inherits his fondness for the chase from his ancestors, his grandfather having been one of its most enthusiastic admirers, when Mr. Corbet's hounds made the Warwickshire woodlands resound with their melody. With his father's pack, in the Ludlow country, he was entered at a very early age—thus, from his childhood, he has been educated to the pursuit. His manner with his hounds in their work is a happy combination of his father's tactics with the more modern, quick, resolute decision of Lord Gifford, whose principles he had frequent opportunities of studying during the time his lordship was residing in the Ludlow country. Being a light weight, and having had good practice both in Shropshire and Herefordshire, he possesses all the attributes of a superior horseman, and the excellent sport he has shown since he has been a master of hounds ensures for him the unqualified esteem and regard of those who appreciate a master of hounds for the talent he possesses. The Albrighton country is a difficult one to show a run over, and the foxes are not easily

brought to hand. It is nearly all arable land; the fences are numerous, many of them very strong, and it is intersected with roads to a greater extent than any other district I ever saw.

One of the great obstacles which a master of hounds has to contend with is the want of walks. There are so very few that recourse must be had to other kennels annually for the required number to fill up the ranks with. Of last season's entry, three and a half couples only were bred by Mr. Stubbs. Three couples of these are descended from Notary and Bravery, the former a son of the Belvoir Notary and Sir Richard Sutton's Gaudy. Guardsman, from Sir W. Wynn's kennel, a useful black and white hound, is the progeny of Warrior and Gaylass. Lucy and Lawless are descended from the North Staffordshire Leader and their Purity, a black and white hound. Norman, a two seasons' hunter, is a useful-framed hound, whose good qualities deserve an additional commendation. Harlequin and Hector are also a useful stamp of hound. The last-named couple and a half were bred by Mr. Stubbs. In the third season's entry the Berkeley blood is conspicuous.

The neat hare-pied Dulcet is by Sir Maurice Berkeley's Cruiser and his Darling. She affords the pack great assistance. Bounty and Blameless, from the same kennel, descended from Anglesea and Beeswing, claim notice. Nathan, a clever black, white, and tan hound, bred in these kennels, performs his full share of work. He is a son of Norman and Gaiety. Bowler, in his fourth season, from the North Staffordshire, is a compact, useful little hound. A light grey-pied hound, Comrade, son of the Brocklesby Clasher and the Bedale Affable, is deserving of intended honours.

There is a question I have put to many masters of hounds and huntsmen, upon which I think it would be interesting to gain further information: Whether they have found that young hounds walked by butchers, where they get a considerable quantity of flesh, have been equally susceptible of distemper in its worst forms as those walked at dairy farms, where they get little or none. In my opinion, and from the information I have hitherto been able to obtain, I believe that flesh is of great service. I do not mean by this remark to assert that it will prove a preventive of the malady, but I do not think so many hounds

would die, or have the yellows to so great an extent, if more flesh were given to them before they are brought into the kennels. I should be happy to receive information on this subject, and shall be obliged to any masters of hounds and huntsmen who will favour me with their experience on this point by addressing letters to me at the office of *Bell's Life*, the substance of which on a future occasion I will make known through the medium of its columns.

The kennels now occupied by the Albrighton Hounds are at Whiston Cross, about four miles and a half from Shifnal, on the Wolverhampton road. They are certainly more healthy than the former ones, but I fear they are not quite sound. The stables are close by; they are capable of improvement, not being sufficiently spacious.

In such a populous district, where the love of hunting is so widely diffused, the fields are often enormous, and it speaks well for the future support of these hounds that the rising generation take such a lively interest in the sport. On one day when I was out with them there were four young gentlemen present who have not yet concluded their scholastic duties,

whose wealth will be most extensive, and I was informed they never miss a day when at home, and the hounds meet within reach. But the full share of patronage would be incomplete if the fair portion of the creation were to withhold their powerful influence. In this respect the Albrighton Hunt is well supported, and in the best runs Mrs. Clark and Miss Jones are always seen in enviable places.

A most important portion of a sportsman's house is a well-designed, comfortable, healthy stable. Where that accommodation is wanting, it may generally be constructed at a moderate cost; yet we often see vast sums of money expended without equivalent conveniences. Architects are seldom sportsmen, and elaborate as their plans may be, it is rare to find that the designs are compatible with the exigencies of the equine inmates.

There is in this hunt one of the most exquisite models of perfection I have ever yet seen, at Mr. Thornycroft's delightful residence, Tettenhall Wood, two miles from Wolverhampton, on what, in the jolly days of coaching, when the speed of four horses was the

maximum of pace, was wont to be designated the Holyhead Road.

Any attempt, unaccompanied with drawings, would very inadequately convey an idea of the edifice. The requirements of the animals for which the buildings have been erected, as well as the saving of labour, and the convenience of the attendants are most scrupulously studied. The whole was designed by the liberal and talented owner, and though some of the embellishments may be more tasty and costly than the requirements of the animals actually demand, still economy is a presiding genius, not effective alone with respect to labour, but also in the promotion of health and condition. I will venture to observe, that any gentleman wishing to inspect them would be most courteously received by Mr. Thornycroft.

CHAPTER II.

THE AATHERSTONE COUNTRY AND LORD
CURZON'S HOUNDS.

Immediately adjoining the Quorn, on the eastern boundary, this hunt may be consistently included in the same category, rejoicing in the velvet pastures of Leicestershire, in which county nearly a moiety of it is situated, the remaining portion being in Warwickshire, and a small slice in Staffordshire. Ashby de la Zouch represents the northern limit, where Mr. Meynell Ingram's country joins. Coventry is the extreme southern point, up to which the North Warwickshire hounds send forth their cheering notes, and then extending eastwards towards Lutterworth, beyond that town the Pytchley exercise their prerogative. On the west, Sutton Coldfield and Lichfield form the extremity, and further westward is a narrow tract, that has been for many years unoccupied, known

in former days as the Shenstone country ; but its dimensions are very unimportant. The extent of the Atherstone country, from North to South, may be estimated at somewhere about eight-and-twenty miles, including a similar distance from east to west. The Witherley kennels are, as nearly as possible, in the centre.

Considerable ambiguity surrounds the hunting arrangements of early days. The country evidently was so often divided and subdivided, that it is totally impossible to define dates or districts. The first master of hounds of whom there is any reliable authority was the Marquis of Donegal, whose hunting pastimes were most probably enjoyed in the neighbourhood of Lichfield and Tamworth. Then followed Lord Talbot, and as his lordship's hounds were sold to Mr. Lambton in 1793, that event affords a little insight into dates. About the close of the last century Lord Vernon hunted the country around Sudbury, which now forms a portion of Mr. Meynell Ingram's district ; his lordship also patronised the neighbourhood of Lichfield, including the wild regions of Cannock Chase, where, at a period not remote, grouse and game of divers kinds

enjoyed their freedom; but they are now expelled from their haunts by civilisation and coalpits, if the former term can be associated with the hardy sons of humanity who toil away their lives in underground adventures. Lord Vernon had kennels likewise at Gopsal, where he resided part of the season. These hounds held a high position among the celebrities of the day, and the members of the hunt being attired in coats of a bright orange colour, as the distinctive costume, vast rivalry ensued when the neighbouring scarlets met them in the field. Thus was the country hunted for several seasons, when it was transferred with a subscription to the care of the Rev. George Talbot, quite a professor of the art, who being suddenly called away from all earthly strife, appears to have been succeeded by Mr. Otway. That veteran sportsman and superlative judge of hounds and hunting, Sir Richard Pulestone, too, whose peripatetic habits led him to wander with his pack into any precincts which foxes frequented, and sport was in the perspective, made occasional descents in this vicinity. At another period Mr. Adderley had hounds, and Mr. Hall, in conjunction with Mr. Arkwright, kept the

foxes in subjection on the Sudbury side. Then Colonel Cooke, of literary reputation, who wrote so well of foxhounds and of foxhunting, exemplified his talent for about two seasons. It was, however, under the brilliant and energetic influences of Mr. Osbaldeston that the capabilities of this fine country were brought out in their most attractive forms, and the distinctive cognomen of the Atherstone hunt was established. A club was formed, and the kennels were built at Witherley. Still retaining the Sudbury district, "the Squire" apportioned his time between the two, residing four weeks out of six at Atherstone, the other two at the Flitch of Bacon, Wichnor Bridge. It was not quite in accordance with the Master's taste to content himself with hunting three days in the week, hence the arrangement, but that only lasted for one year. When a determination to afford sport was manifested by the master of the hounds, it was found that the Atherstone district alone was sufficient for the required five days. The Sudbury side was therefore resigned, when Mr. Meynell Ingrain, about that time establishing his hounds at Hoar Cross, regarded it as a

most valuable and important acquisition. Mr. Osbaldeston's continuance was but for three years; though brief, it was brilliant. Here it was that he rendered perfect a large body of hounds he had brought with him from Nottinghamshire—originally Lord Monson's, which he purchased on his first taking the Burton country. To those were added Lord Vernon's famous pack, and the hounds belonging to Messrs. Hall and Arkwright. Here it was, too, that the Squire matured his experience previously to entering upon the classic pasture fields of Quorn. A successor was found in Sir Bellingham Graham, whose truly splendid establishment, organised by an unquestionably correct taste for everything appertaining to foxhunting, and for which that distinguished sportsman has ever been celebrated, ensured the esteem of all for whose amusement his exertions were so ably directed. As a huntsman, Sir Bellingham Graham took a first-class position, whether compared with the ranks of amateurs or professionals; while in the selection of his servants he was unequivocally successful—a fact which subsequent events proclaim. William Staples, Kit Atkinson, John Wig-

glesworth, and Tom Flint, have each of them occupied the ostensible post of huntsman in various establishments of high repute. The thorough knowledge of the duties of huntsmen which each of them possessed was gained during their service with Sir Bellingham, or, if I may be permitted the expression, in consequence of his invaluable tuition.

A triplet of years passed away most agreeably under Sir Bellingham's fortuitous domination, when he was induced to remove into Hampshire, and all the rights and appurtenances appertaining to the Atherstone were transferred to Lord Anson, afterwards Earl of Lichfield, the said rights and appurtenances having been in every respect scientifically revised and settled in conformity with modern usages. As regarded such matters his lordship commenced under very favourable circumstances. The country was well supplied with the essential elements of sport in the matter of foxes, and the farmers were thoroughly aware of the advantages they derived from having the country hunted by gentlemen whose influence attracted numerous visitors of aristocratic birth and wealthy acquirements; but a pack of hounds was

essential to render perfect the programme. In those days, more than forty years ago, there was nothing like the number of hounds bred that there have been in modern times, and to form a pack, any new aspirant to the honours of becoming a M.F.H. had to collect them as best he could. Again, the occult science of breeding was not so comprehensibly adopted, nor even understood, neither was the general management of hounds conducted on the principle of common sense and propriety that are now the rule; rogues and vagabonds of all grades and characters were the component particles, riot and insubordination the two common results. The only pack his lordship had an opportunity of purchasing was Mr. Mytton's. It was a heterogeneous composition in every acceptation of the term—the only redeeming quality was that they were better descended than many hounds of their day, most of them having been procured from Sir Richard Pulestone's kennels, the Belvoir, and the Cheshire. To them Lord Anson made additions from Sir Thomas Mostyn's and Mr. Muster's packs, together with drafts from divers other kennels, so that in a few seasons an efficient body was formed,

and if not very perfect on the flags, the main point was accomplished—they could find, hunt, and kill, or account for their foxes. This was not only his lordship's first essay as a master of hounds, but, following the example of his predecessor, he undertook to hunt them, in which he was ably assisted by two superior whippers-in, Robert Thurlow and Jesse, whose patronymic I never knew. During the nine seasons Lord Anson hunted the country, he showed great sport, which, with the *agrément*s of fashion, induced many noblemen and gentlemen to select the neighbourhood as their hunting quarters. His lordship was a patron of “the ribbons,” and it was a frequent occurrence to see several four-in-hand teams at the covert side. Possessing all the excellent qualifications and accomplishments which distinguish an English nobleman, great regret was expressed when it became known that his lordship was about to resign, that regret being enhanced by the serious cause, indisposition, arising from frequent and painful attacks of gout. The next in succession was Sir John Gerard, who, like Lord Suffield in the Quorn country, was not successful in his efforts to show sport.

He purchased the hounds, which by that time had become an efficient and valuable pack, and the horses upon which he mounted himself and his men, Thurlow and Jesse, were all of very high pretensions. Every accessory that a liberal spirit could suggest was provided, and if money could have purchased the suffrages of Diana it was never withheld. But Sir John undertook, as his predecessors had done, to hunt his own hounds, an attempt in which, without the slightest disrespect for his memory, he was not so successful as they had been, and at the expiration of one brief season he handed all over to Mr. Applethwaite. Under the new dynasty the quondam sport of the country was restored, the horn was intrusted to Thurlow, Jesse was promoted to the post of first whipper-in; and, interfering but little with the active management in the field, Mr. Applethwaite presided over all with the quiet dignity of a country gentleman, respected and popular with all classes. He continued to hunt the country fourteen seasons, a longer term than any of his predecessors had held it, affording convincing testimony of mutual approbation. On this

gentleman's resignation, Mr. Colville became his successor, making room for Captain Anstruther Thomson, who withdrew in 1849 in favour of Mr. Wilson, but that gentleman retaining the honours only one year, Captain Thomson resumed the occupation. He had a fine pack of hounds, rather exceeding the average size of the present day, he was withal a sportsman, and the results are patent. In the year 1855, the Bicester country having been temporarily vacated by Mr. Drake, Captain Thomson removed his establishment to hunt it, when Mr. Selby Lowndes, declining the North Warwickshire, brought his hounds to the Witherley kennels, and entered into an engagement as master of the Atherstone Hunt. The fame this gentleman had acquired during the lengthened period he hunted the vicinity of Whaddon Chase will ever be pleasingly associated with his name. He had doubtless a very clever pack of hounds, mostly of the female sex, which it was his custom to feed on Indian meal, but what advantages it possesses over oatmeal I have never been able to discover.

The country only came into the possession of Lord Curzon three seasons before I visited

it ; his lordship had therefore but a brief period to form the pack, which has been very successfully accomplished. Whatever it may be necessary to put together, whether it be a house or a pack of foxhounds, it is of the highest importance that the material selected be of the best quality. If a house be built with bad bricks the walls will be imperfect, and if the interior be fitted up with defective embellishments they speedily lose their effects. So it is with hounds. If they have bad constitutions they will disappoint you ; if they have bad habits they will perplex you. It may be suggested, how are these conditions to be anticipated ? To a great extent they may be very extensively ascertained by studying the peculiar qualities of certain packs, and then again minutely examining the properties of particular families. Great judgment has been exercised at the Atherstone kennels in resorting to good sources for the materials. They are now composed of hounds purchased from Mr. Selby Lowndes, on his resignation of the country ; several lots from the South Wilts, the property of, and bred by, Mr. Wyndham, an old and very experienced sportsman ;

drafts from Mr. Meynell Ingram, whose pack has been established nearly half a century; a valuable lot purchased at the sale of the North Warwickshire; and, lastly, in addition to the hounds bred at the kennels, there is the unentered draft from the Oakley. Among those bred at the kennels there are three couples particularly clever: Marquis and Marksman are two nice active young hounds, sons of Minster and Toilet, the latter from the Belvoir kennels. Purity, a hare-pied bitch, deep and muscular, on good short legs, is the issue of the Duke of Beaufort's Pleader and Cautious. Potentate, of similar lineage—a black, white, and tan hound—has much power and quality to recommend him. Sultan and Saladin, sons of Sanguine, are very promising—the dam, an ancient matron, is in her thirteenth year. In the Oakley draft are Archer and Alarie, Craftsman and Chanter, by their Sportsman and Croney; Cromwell, by the Belvoir Trusty and Oakley Cowslip; and Comrade, by the Belvoir Comrade, is a very nice young hound. There are also several very promising bitches, of which I think Cowslip, sister to Cromwell, is perhaps as good-looking as any. In addition to these

are Harriet, Flyer, Patience, Sylvia, Adelaide and Arrogant, by the Belvoir Alfred and Oakley Purity ; Buxom, a very stylish daughter of the Oakley Lucifer, all very neat and of good origins ; Bluebell, Bounty, and Bondsman, of the Fitzwilliam Bluecap family, and Bellmaid ; by the same sire—Music and Sportsman. The two seasons' hunters are remarkably level and useful. There is a nice lot from the Duke of Beaufort's kennel, by Saladin and his grace's Termagant—Tamerlane, Termagant, Telltale, and Truelove. The dog hound shows great symmetry and power, combined with activity. Termagant, black and white, is remarkably handsome, and so is Telltale, between which the family likeness is very conspicuous. Sanguine, Symphony, Sally, and Scandal, representatives of Raglan and the old lady already introduced as the dam of Sultan and Saladin, are exceedingly nice. Butterfly is remarkably pretty, but scarcely on the scale which generally prevails in these kennels. Famous is also worthy of admiration, and Careful, a hare-pied bitch, has plenty of length, with capital thighs, which, in my estimation, are of vast importance. Dolphin, a yellow-pied

hound, is particularly clever about his head, neck, and shoulders. All of this season's entry not otherwise mentioned were bred by Lord Curzon. In the next season's entry there is a good deal of blood from Mr. Meynell Ingram's kennel, powerful and useful, with the recognised quality of foxhounds. I should select a black and white hound, Agent, son of Alaric and Graceful, and likewise Albion, by the same sire, and Laura. Comus, all over a nice hound, by the Bramham Moor Carver and Mr. Meynell Ingram's Proserpine, though he has somewhat of a bluish tinge in his coat, which rather detracts from his appearance. Argus, Active, and Artful, from the same kennel, claim approbation, especially Argus. Champion, Cruiser, and Constance, by Cameron and Sibyl, from the South Wilts, are of a very useful stamp, and Constance is remarkably elegant. The head of their sire is stuffed, and adorns Lord Curzon's breakfast room, a sure test of the estimation in which he was held. Tarquin, a light hare-pied hound of great substance, remarkably elegant, came from Mr. Meynell Ingram's, and is in his fourth season; also Fanciful, a good-looking bitch from Lord Dacre's, with a

splendid head and shoulders, and very thick through the heart. Bachelor and Brevity were bred by Mr. Selby Lowndes. The latter reminds me much of those fine lengthy bitches for which Mr. Farquharson's kennel was so highly celebrated, and with some of whom Mr. Henry Villebois so surprised the Duke of Beaufort's cubs when his grace invited him to have six weeks' cub hunting in the Badminton woodlands. The five season hunters include Rambler, Raglan, and Rebel, sons of the Belvoir Rover, and Lord Southampton's Folly. Dickens informed me they are descended from Mr. Osbaldeston's Furrier, a family ever held in the highest estimation. Rufus, a light-coloured hound, has the same blood in his veins through Lord Southampton's Prizer and Mr. Selby Lowndes's Rakish; he is a clever hound, and does credit to his celebrated ancestor. Ransom, a nearly white bitch, very lengthy, with finely developed muscles, came from the South Wilts, and is a daughter of Sultan and Rakish. Watchman, a powerful good-looking black and white hound, son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Challenger and Mr. Selby Lowndes's Wisdom, is destined to per-

petuate his species in these kennels; and Hoyden, a daughter of the Duke of Beaufort's Trojan and his Hasty, is also kept to breed from. Trojan was a son of the Warwickshire Tarquin, a capital sort in their work, as all masters of hounds and huntsmen admit who have had any of that blood. The lot which Lord Curzon purchased at the sale of the North Warwickshire hounds in May last, consisted of six couples, whereof two couples and a half were of the black and tan family, Lively, Lottery, Lounger, and Liberty, by Manager and Lofty, but they were not all of the same year. Manager, their sire, a very superior hound, remarkably well bred, came in an unentered draft from the Heythrop, and was a son of their Ferdinand and Matchless. The other hound of this strain is Nectar, by Wenlock, through whom the black and tan blood is conveyed, and Nosegay. Of the value of this cross I entertain no doubt, having been witness to so much excellence through successive generations, dating almost from the time when, in the neighbourhood of Bridgnorth, in the sporting county of Salop, the infusion was first introduced. I do not mean to declare that every

hound so bred must be perfect, any more than the produce of others; for no person conversant with the uncertainties connected with the breeding of hounds, horses, or any other animals, can fall into such an error. The veritable black and tan will, in some instances, present itself, which to the fastidious in colour may be objectionable, but, for my own part, I would rather admit it than the slatey blue, which is sometimes found in the most fashionable kennels. It is well known that when Mr. Baker had so much of the blood in North Warwickshire, they would hunt a cold scent, when no other hound in the pack could own it, and there were hounds from various kennels celebrated for nose; they could run at the head, however good the pace, and their constitutions were as good as their companions. Another of the North Warwickshire lot, but not of the black and tan strain, doing remarkably well, is Famous, a very handsome black, white, and tan, with capital loins and thighs; she came, unentered, from the Hon. G. Fitzwilliam's kennel, and is descended from the Belvoir Trusty and his Factious; there are very few showing more fashion and quality. Actress, for whom Mr.

Baker received the prize at the Birmingham Dog Show, in 1861, does not retain her good looks; she has fallen away over her loins, where she formerly was so good; she has lost much muscular development, and her general appearance indicated her having been amiss. As a pack, looking them over in the paddock, Lord Curzon's are particularly symmetrical. It is seldom that so many really good-shouldered hounds are seen together. They cannot fail for pace when scent permits them to exert their powers, and much praise is due to Dickens for the evenness of their condition.

The stables contain twenty-two hunters, seven of which are ridden by Lord Curzon, a similar number is appropriated to the use of the huntsman, and there are four for each of the whippers-in. They are all of a very useful stamp, and, like the hounds, the model of good shoulders has been most especially regarded. There is a magnificent old brown horse in his lordship's stud called Gopsal, a son of Drayton, who, as a sire of good hunters, has worthily distinguished himself; they are not, however, in general, remarkable for beauty; Gopsal is an exception. He was bred by Lord Howe,

and well remembering the superior style of horse his lordship invariably selected, it may be readily assumed that the dam of Gopsal conveyed the beauty of outline. Neighbour, a chesnut—a prevailing colour, by the way—has very good looks to recommend him; so also has Kelmarsh; both are in great favour with Lord Curzon. Sunbeam, bought of Darby, who supplies these stables with many of the inmates, and Blondin, are ridden by the huntsman, and are selected to do duty when the hounds meet on the Rugby side.

To sally forth with a hope of witnessing a day's sport with hounds when the elements appear to be in a state of boisterous antagonism can scarcely be reconciled. On the morning when I had determined to meet the Atherstone hounds at Kirkby, one of their favourite fixtures on the Leicestershire side of the country, just about the hour for setting off there was such a contest between hail, snow, and rain, with a boisterous wind, as I never before witnessed, and the probability of anything approaching to a scent was a matter of very great doubt; the ride to cover was anything but cheering. However, on reaching Kirkby the weather improved, though it

continued stormy, with considerable wind throughout the day. Under these circumstances a large field could not be expected. So without any delay the hounds proceeded to draw the coverts at Normanton, where it is rare not to find abundance of foxes, which, however, was not the case on this occasion. The inclemency of the night might have been the cause of the foxes not leaving their earths, and, consequently, of being stopped in. More charming coverts than those which were drawn the imagination can scarcely suggest, though the wild habits and instincts of the vulpine family scarcely seem to associate with the high farming on this fine estate. And then, what a delightful country to have ridden over, had a fox been found, and the scent been good. The land sound, turf predominating over plough, the fences in good order, and inviting to ride over, with not a tree in the hedgerows to be seen ; a custom which perchance is carried to excess in other places than this ; but, happily, I neither saw nor heard of wires in this vicinity, and I sincerely trust they will never be introduced. The coverts being small, it was very important they should not be surrounded, and it was

pleasing to observe the excellent order which Lord Curzon maintained. Courteously, but authoritatively, his lordship required any incautious individual to come back who might present himself to view in the event of a fox being found. It is a duty at all times most impressive when undertaken by a master of hounds. Investing a huntsman with such authority places him in a position which not unfrequently engenders ill feeling towards him. On proceeding to Kirkby Old Wood a fox was soon on foot, and the squeaking notes of Famous and Spiteful, which were conspicuous throughout the day, assisted in causing him to break away in the direction of Peckleton Village; but it was very soon evident that there was not half a scent, and the difficulties of the hounds at this particular point were not diminished in consequence of the line the fox had chosen being among the buildings and gardens; yet they worked it admirably, judiciously assisted by their huntsman, whose casts were made with promptitude, decision, and success. Having cleared the village the hounds ran a circuit towards Lindridge, then turned for Tooley brake, where they ran into their fox. Neither the

length of the run nor the pace call for any exordium, but it presented a far better opportunity of forming an opinion of the hunting powers of the hounds and the tactics of their huntsman than a burst of thirty minutes with a blazing scent would have done, no cast being necessary, and pace only an essential. A second fox, found at Brascote spinny, ran through Botany Bay towards Bosworth, leaving Cadeby on the left, by Newbold gate, was pulled down in a garden at Newbold Village.

The attractions in the Atherstone country have lost none of their *prestige*. Whatever might have been the aspirations of former masters, and however successful their exertions were, none could have exceeded Lord Curzon in their devotion to the object in view. Entering into every matter of detail with earnestness of purpose, intimately acquainted with the properties of every hound in the kennel, and presiding over all with that dignity his rank and position in the county enable him to exercise, and yet preserving courteous affability, his lordship's efforts cannot fail to be successful and thoroughly appreciated. There is, too, another very

important consideration, which must not be omitted ; it is a most agreeable country to ride over. Without bearing the character of insignificance, the fences are generally negotiable, the land sound, with a fair proportion of grass ; indeed, so far as my own observation enables me to form an opinion, the innovations of the plough have not, comparatively, been so extensive of late years as in other parts of Leicestershire. A smaller stud will suffice than either in the Quorn or Mr. Tailby's countries. The Ashby de la Zouch side is good, extending to Gopsal, Bosworth, and Hinckley, and so it is bearing eastward to the precincts of the Quorn. There is also a fine sporting country around Newnham Paddox and Coomb Abbey, easy of access from Rugby and Leamington, but it is heavier, and the fences are stronger. Between Atherstone and Tamworth there is a fine tract of land. Westward of the last-named town a poor soil prevails, and scent, an important element, is generally deficient.

CHAPTER III.

THE OLD BERKSHIRE HOUNDS AND COUNTRY.

This and the Vale of White Horse country were for many years hunted by one pack of hounds, and it appears somewhat singular that the White Horse, the object from which the denomination was originally derived, is situated nearly at the furthermost extremity of the Old Berkshire Hunt. The configuration is near Uffington, no great distance from Wantage, the birthplace of Alfred, with whose achievements antiquarians assign a connection, considering it to be a memorial of the bravery and patriotism which he displayed even before he came to the throne. In the reign of his brother, Ethereld the First, the Danes, who had invaded Berkshire, were routed with great slaughter, in a battle known as that of *Æscesdun* (Ash-tree Hill). It was contended by Dr. Wise, a learned Antiquary of the last century, that the ridge of chalk hills

extending from Wantage into Wiltshire was the scene of this battle, and that the White Horse, which is cut out on the slope of the chalk, is a memorial of the great victory. The White Horse, which gives name to the hill and to the extensive valley below, is a most singular device. It is a rude figure, three hundred and seventy-four feet in length, bearing nearly as good a representation of a greyhound as of an animal of the equine race. The demarcation was formed by removing the turf, and thus laying bare the substratum of chalk, on the north-west surface of the hill, and it is said to be visible, under favourable circumstances, when the afternoon sun is about to descend below the horizon, as far as fifteen miles. This much I take from information, for my visionary powers were unable to discover the portraiture while travelling within distance on the Great Western Railway. It might have been that in his winter garb this gigantic emblem of the horse was more than usually obscure; perchance, too, that my optics were defective. It has been supposed that lands in the neighbourhood were formerly held by the tenure of cleaning the White Horse, by

cutting away the springing turf. An annual festival was formerly held to perform this ceremony, which, if not totally abandoned, is only observed at uncertain intervals; peradventure, when his coat becomes rough, and clipping is therefore an act of necessity to promote attraction. This peculiar emblem being situated in a conspicuous boundary of the Vale, the association of the name is readily conceived, and hence the distinction by which the Hunt was known when the whole extent was under one master; consequently, at the time that Lord Ducie made arrangements for the division, he carried the title to that part of the country over which he continued to preside. In its entirety it was hunted at a very early date, but authentic accounts are wanting prior to the close of the last century. It has been said that a gentleman of the name of Loder was the first to enliven these plains with the cheering accompaniments of hounds and horn, and that he was succeeded by Mr. Symonds cotemporary with Mr. Bowes. I believe, however, that the fifth Earl Berkeley occasionally brought his hounds to hunt portions of the country, as it was his lordship's pleasure to remove his pack

to any part of the western counties where foxes were reported to be levying contributions on unsecured hen-roosts, for in those days the vulpine race must have been remarkably scarce, and no pack of hounds could find a sufficient number without travelling far and wide in search of them. At that period, when countries were so very extensive, some of the present observances were uncalled for; but when foxhunting assumed a greater degree of importance, and packs became more numerous throughout the kingdom, it became necessary for their owners and supporters to introduce rules and regulations; thus the limits of countries became defined, and every master of hounds enjoys conventional privileges within the territory over which he reigns. In olden times the vexatious disappointments of blank days were of frequent occurrence, and foxhunters had frequently weary toilsome rides to encounter, in order to obtain the enjoyment of one good run. It is said that foxes were stouter; they were certainly wilder, and long runs compensated our forefathers for many hardships it was their pride to boast of.

Mr. Nicol's name must also be included,

and Mr. Codrington, a gentleman represented to have been a very superior sportsman, commenced hunting this country early in the present century, and continued the mastership till 1824, when the late Mr. Harvey Coombe undertook it conjointly with the Old Berkeley. Two seasons terminated this gentleman's engagement, when Lord Kintore came forward and presided over the arrangements with the utmost zeal and enthusiasm, hunting his own hounds, and exhibiting daring deeds of horsemanship scarcely ever approached; but a triennial occupation was unfortunately the extent of the noble lord's career in this country, when the late Earl Ducie, then the Honourable Henry Moreton, made his *début* as a master of foxhounds. On the division of the country being decided upon two years afterwards, and when Mr. Moreton removed his hounds from Farringdon to Oakley Park, Mr. Parker, of Worcester, was entrusted with the duties of hunting this country, under the denomination of the Old Berkshire. This lasted but one season, for although Mr. Parker was an excellent sportsman, "the sinews of war" with him were weak, and the subscriptions not being ade-

quate to the expenditure, Lord Radnor relieved him from the responsibilities, but only continued the mastership two seasons. Such frequent changes are most disastrous to success in hunting any country. A pack of hounds is scarcely got together before they may have to be disposed of, or perhaps removed; but if they remain, the new master exerts all his energies to improve upon the work of his predecessor, and for a time, at least, throws all into confusion. Regarding vastly conflicting qualities as perfections, the good properties which the original pack possesses are not unfrequently annihilated by the introduction of some characteristics completely at variance with those which have been so assiduously promoted. To the late Mr. Morland Lord Radnor resigned the hounds and country, his lordship having purchased the pack, in the spring of 1833, from Sir Richard Pulestone, Bart., of Emral, in Flintshire, a very celebrated sportsman of the old school, and considered the best judge of hounds of his time. Mr. Morland retained the responsibilities of office several years, affording him every opportunity to organise the pack according to his wishes, and most

complimentarily is he spoken of as having discharged his duties, till the unrelenting hand of death called him away. On this occasion a gentleman came forward whose qualifications as a master of hounds are rarely approached, and it is greatly to be regretted that any event should have occurred to have prompted Mr. Morrell to retire, which he did three years ago, after having formed a pack of hounds of inestimable value; and so ably were they hunted by Thomas Clark as to induce the Duke of Beaufort to offer him the vacant horn at Badminton. His grace became a purchaser at a long figure, at the well-remembered Tubney sale, on the 14th of April, 1858, of some of the choicest hounds, together with the huntsman's especial pets, Spangle and Skilful, and they have done good service in that old-established and very highly celebrated kennel.

Mr. Morrell's efforts as a master of hounds were not restricted to the management in the field, the preservation of foxes and the numerous imperative details of that nature; but he likewise devoted vast attention to the breeding of hounds, in which undertaking

his energies were signalised with the greatest success. On his resignation, the hunting establishment was disposed of through the agency of Messrs. Tattersall. When a first-rate pack becomes thus dispersed, the regret is not confined to the disbanding of the gallant force, for it frequently happens that many of the celebrities, invaluable for breeding purposes, cannot after a few years be traced. The genealogical tree is dismembered, and difficulty is experienced in establishing a title.* The amount realised for Mr. Morrell's hounds was nearly 2,600 guineas—2,000 guineas having been previously refused for them. This produced an average of £32 12s. 3d. per couple, the Duke of Beaufort, Earl of Stamford, Lord Southampton, Hon. F. Villiers, Messrs. Duffield, Villebois, and Scratton, being the principal purchasers. Five lots of hunting hounds and one lot of unentered hounds were bought in, and presented by Mr. Morrell to the V.W. H.

* To obviate this, I propose to publish a Kennel Stud Book, containing complete pedigrees of the celebrated sires of olden times; tracing them through the sales by which many of them have been dispersed to their position in the packs of the present day; together with full lists of all existing packs.

The horses were sold well, the average £109 15s. 8d. Those bought in were afterwards disposed of for 200 guineas more than the reserved price. Chesterfield, the horse from which Mr. Morrell had his bad fall, was sold to Mr. Aldworth; Wild Rose, Sir Warwick, and Rob Roy, were afterwards disposed of to the Duke of Beaufort. The total of the whole sale amounted to £6,365 2s.

The ordinary difficulty at all times consequent on the retirement of a master of hounds to find a successor was on this occasion manifestly enhanced. Mr. Morrell, when he embarked in the undertaking, regulated his establishment with a judicious hand and a most liberal spirit. This, added to the popularity he had previously acquired in his position as a country gentleman, with great success attending his efforts, a vast amount of sport was shown during the time he had the command; it was therefore a natural result that his successor might labour under a certain degree of nervous diffidence; and, indeed, it was not till some little time had elapsed, after Mr. Morrell had declared his intentions, that a successor was installed in office in the person of Mr. Duffield; and

fortunate indeed are the members of the Hunt in having a gentleman so able and zealous at the head of affairs. History assures us that from the earliest ages to the present moment no nation has flourished where athletic exercises, coming under the denomination of field sports, have been neglected, and foxhunting, *par excellence*, ranks on the highest pinnacle of fame. How deeply, therefore, is England indebted to masters of hounds for their chivalrous, patriotic exertions. Few who are not intimately associated with them can form any idea of the difficulties with which they have to contend. There are owners of coverts, preservers of foxes and of their game to be consulted, and, as a matter of expediency and courtesy, it is quite due to them that their wishes should be respected; in doing so, it not unfrequently happens that the requirements of subscribers clash, and, with conflicting interests, masters of hounds have often intricate courses to steer, surrounded with invisible shoals, and in order to keep on good terms with each party—indeed, to keep them on good terms with each other—much conciliatory tact is imperatively necessary. Then there are the farmers to be kept

in good favour—a most important point, not only at regards the preservation of foxes, but for their very valuable co-operation in walking young hounds. The services of keepers have not only to be paid for—and in many hunts they are paid at an exorbitant rate—but their actions require to be pretty carefully regarded. Little items, insignificant in detail, which present themselves daily, amount to a considerable aggregate throughout the year, creating anxieties to which a master of hounds is at all times subservient. In the field there is daily much anxious responsibility in the endeavours to show sport, and the "*suaviter in modo, fortituir in re,*" is an accomplishment of the utmost value. The power of overcoming these difficulties was most happily combined in Mr. Duffield, and the unanimity of good feeling expressed towards him in the hunting field affords the surest testimony how highly his exertions were appreciated.

My first day with these hounds was most unfortunate as regards weather; a more inauspicious condition of the elements could scarcely be exceeded. They met at Milton Hill, the seat of Mr. Bowles, an excellent

preserver of foxes, and an ardent admirer of the “longtails,” and after the preliminary hospitalities, very acceptable on such a cold morning, had been proffered, the hounds proceeded to draw the gorse covert. This was so completely beaten down by the weight of the snow that had fallen on it during the winter, that it appeared almost impracticable for hounds to work through it—at any rate, with sufficient energy to force a fox away. They were not long before they roused him from his kennel, and it would not be doing them justice if I did not state that they performed their work admirably, under great difficulties, with a bad scent, and an almost impenetrable mass of gorse; after being two or three times headed, he eventually broke covert at the further end, and the hounds were got quickly away in a workmanlike manner, which enabled them to hunt him on better terms than could have been expected; bearing to the left, after running through the corner of a small spinney, a check ensued at some farm buildings, which was fatal to a burst. With a most miserable scent they hunted with great steadiness in the direction of the Cow Leaze, a well known stronghold

of the vulpine family, close to the Great Western Railway, and making a wide cast the hounds got upon the stale line of a fox, when being held on to the wood, a fox got up before them, but whether it was the one they had found in the gorse, or a fresh one, was, in my humble opinion, a matter of doubt; be that as it may, the scent was so very defective that they could do nothing with him. Milton Gorse was again drawn, when a second fox was found, and after some coquetting he, too, went away, but the necessary element was still wanting, and very cold hunting nearly to Marcham Park, the residence of Mr. Duffield, terminated the proceedings of the day. As regards sport—that is, in the riding acceptation of the term—there was none, but I had an opportunity of observing the hounds endeavouring to hunt under insurmountable difficulties—a safer test of intrinsic worth than when with a brilliant scent they are enabled to roll over their fox in a burst of twenty minutes without a check.

On the following day, by appointment, I paid a visit at the kennels, which are at Oakley House. The list enumerated forty-

two couples and a half, of which twelve and a half couples were of that year's entry. In conformity with an excellent and a very prevailing custom, Mr. Duffield gave two prizes annually to the farmers or persons who walk the most promising young hounds, and that season the first was awarded to Mr. Woodbridge, of Abingdon, for rearing Challenger, and the second to Mr. Luker, of Farringdon, for walking Jasper. Challenger is a great fine black and white hound, with much power, but somewhat heavy in his shoulders, and without quite corresponding muscular development in his thighs. He is descended from an excellent family—Sir Maurice Berkeley's Chieftain and the South Berks Rapid. Jasper is a black and white hound, not quite so powerful as his companion, nevertheless of good size—a son of Lord Yarborough's Orator and the South Berks Jewess. Rummager, a black and white hound, nicely marked with tan, is quite equal to the preceding; he has considerable power, with much elegance and activity, a son of Lord Yarborough's Ottoman, his dam Resolute. Termagant, a light grey-pied bitch by the same sire, her dam Telltale, attracted my attention

in the field on the preceding day, doing a great share of work with a very defective scent. Tamerlane, her brother, is a very useful young hound. Trimbush and Talisman are of the same litter. Of the two seasons' hunters, Autocrat, from Mr. Farquharson's kennel, is a smart, useful hound, and he has three sisters—Abigail, Affable, and Amazon—worthy of notice. Amethyst, to whom I had a special introduction in honour of her being the first to find her fox in the gorse on the preceding day, is from the Heythrop kennels, a daughter of Ajax and Gladsome, nice and airy with good shoulders. Hereford, a powerful young hound with a most intelligent head, whose exploits during the three seasons he has been at work have gained great fame for him, was bred at the Berkeley kennels, and is a son of Mr. Morrell's Fleecer and the late Earl Fitzhardinge's Hyacinth. Heroine, a four season hunter, by Hercules, entered by Sir Richard Sutton, bears a striking resemblance to her mother, Mr. Morrell's Spangle, transferred to the Duke of Beaufort's kennels at the sale for fifty guineas. Telltale, a great favourite, accompanied the huntsman

from the Surrey Union kennels, and is the dam of Termagant.

John Dale, who was huntsman some ten or twelve seasons to the Surrey Union, came to this country on Mr. Duffield entering upon it. He had previously hunted the Vine, was several years whipper-in to Lord Kintore in Scotland, and also with the Lanark and Renfrewshire Hounds, and a season or two with the Oakley; therefore, with so many good opportunities of studying his occupation, there is no doubt of his proficiency. He is a light weight, and always being well mounted by Mr. Duffield goes well to hounds. William Maiden, the first whip, would repudiate his paternity if he did not know how to perform his duties, for it is a family heritage to be devotedly fond of hounds and hunting. He commenced under his father's tuition, then took a trip into the Southwold country, and returning to his father, turned the hounds to him two or three seasons, came to this country in the service of Mr. Morrell, then crossed over to the Emerald Isle, tried his hand one season in Leicestershire, and engaged himself to Mr. Duffield in 1858.

Although my first day with these hounds

was unsatisfactory, under the inauspicious condition of the elements, the second attempt fully compensated for the disappointment. It was a humid morning, with a light wind from the south east, and the place of meeting Wadley House. A goodly assemblage of sportsmen congregated, to whom the well-known hospitalities of the mansion were profffered with that liberality which prevails in Berkshire. The large pack was selected for the occasion, and their appearance did great credit to the presiding genius of the kennel. Colonel Goodlake piloted the way to the covert to be drawn first, and the chief topic of conversation turned upon the probability of having to encounter Rosey Brook at starting, a well-known stream with hollow banks, into which many an aspirant for fame has found himself emerged not only in water, but also in inexpressible grief, in consequence of the difficulty generally experienced in extricating his horse. A small covert known as the Rogue's Coppice held a fox; he was quickly found and as quickly viewed away, the hounds close at his brush, when the fun commenced. There was one gentleman with his horse seen combating the waters, not in the

Rosey Brook, but in a tributary stream hard by; the huntsman got well over, but the hounds bearing somewhat to the right, the remainder of the field took a different—indeed, a nearer—route. Another gentleman I noticed with his horse's fore legs under the lowermost bar of a flight of rails, not in a very enviable position, but there was no time for delay to contemplate disasters; the hounds had settled to the scent, and were racing away at the top of their speed, when, making a slight *détour* to the left, in sixteen minutes, without a check till they got into the last field, pointing for Farringdon Clumps, they ran into their fox. This check, if such it could be called, simply arose from the fact of the dying fox, after having gone through a small plantation and across a small field, threading, as beaten foxes are wont to do, a thick hedgerow. It was short, sharp, and decisive, the *acmé* of perfection to those who delight in bursts; every hound was in his place, and the ceremonial of breaking up the fox was performed most artistically. Proceeded then to draw Coxwell Furze Hills, no easy matter for hounds, as it is of considerable extent, and one of the strongest gorse

coverts I have seen for many a day, rendered more than usually difficult by the weight of snow that had fallen on it during the winter. That it was tenanted soon became apparent, and the fox made divers attempts to break away, which, after a lapse of more than three quarters of an hour, he succeeding in doing, pointing for Wadley, but turned to the left before reaching the railway, and again to the left, as if Coleshill was his destination ; hard pressed, he next gained a plantation near Fearnham, having previously skirted the village, where, running short, considerable delay was occasioned, with the probability of his having found a place of refuge in some of the outbuildings. The huntsman, however, lost no time in making a judicious cast, and hit his fox into the plantation, where, after waiting some little time, he was viewed away, and the hounds again set to work in earnest, running nearly to the Furzehills, but did not reach them, preferring the coal pits, where, running very short, the hunting powers of the pack were again in request ; still they persevered gallantly, and, once more forcing him into the open, ran into him close on the outskirts of the town of Farringdon. The time

occupied from find to finish was one hour and thirty minutes, and the run afforded an excellent opportunity of observing both the hunting and racing properties of the pack. The country, too, was of a decidedly different character to that in the neighbourhood of Milton Hill, where the fields are of immense size and the fences insignificantly small. Around Wadley there are plenty of fences strong enough to satisfy the most ambitious for riding fame, and there is a fair proportion of pasture land. The Old Berkshire country, indeed, is much diversified, and the friends to stone walls will find them prevailing on the Oxfordshire boundary.

I have now to record another change, one which I did not contemplate when I was hunting in the Berkshire country, and witnessed Mr. Duffield's great exertions to show sport, not confining himself to his especial position as master, but combining too the talented responsibilities of huntsman, or indeed of whipper-in, if occasion required his assistance. In the spring of 1863, this gentleman resigned his undertaking, and sold his clever pack to Mr. Wherton Wilson, where Dale, ever devoted to his darlings, accompa-

nied them to the V. W. H. kennels. This afforded an opening for Mr. Henley Greaves, who is for the present installed in the Old Berkshire country.*

* If the breaking up of this splendid establishment in 1858 caused regret, how much greater did the sorrow prevail when Mr. Morrell was taken from his family and friends by the unrelenting hand of death, only five years and a half afterwards. His health had been for some time declining, but was hastened by his never-failing desire to render services to those in misfortune. Whilst driving in his carriage at Brighton in the autumn of 1862, he hastened to the assistance of a lady and gentleman who were accidentally thrown from a gig, and in performing this kind office, Mr. Morrell fell heavily to the ground, breaking the skin of his leg which produced a wound not readily healed; and the confinement to the house told sadly on his constitution, so that it is generally believed his mortal illness dated from that period. Mr. Morrell's means were affluent and his heart was great and noble in the dispensation of those means. It was his great pleasure to seek out cases of distress and to relieve the sorrows of the afflicted. Mr. Morrell commenced his sporting career with a pack of harriers; he then became master of the Old Berkshire hounds, and on his retirement kept a kennel of greyhounds, for his private amusement, on his own estates, and as an incitement to take exercise. In all the relations of social life, as a friend, a country gentleman, and a sportsman, he had indeed few equals, and his memory will long be cherished with affectionate respect and admiration.

CHAPTER IV.

THE BURTON COUNTRY AND LORD HENRY
BENTINCK'S HOUNDS.

The Great Northern, the Midland, and the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire railways concentrate at Lincoln, affording the wonted means of locomotion for travelling sportsmen seeking variety in fresh hunting fields, and the ancient city may be accepted as nearly in the centre of the Burton country. Every species of accommodation can be found, and the Saracen's Head Hotel I especially recommend to my friends. Mr. L. Thornton, the worthy landlord's son, is a capital sportsman—one of the best men to hounds, thoroughly acquainted with every portion of the country, and may, therefore, with perfect safety be taken as a pilot. Then there is very ample and commodious stabling in Lincoln that may be rented on economical

terms. Horse provender is reasonable and good ; oats are the produce of the soil, and free from the very obnoxious process of kiln drying so prevalent in many districts where foreign corn forms the principal bulk. I can safely assert that oats so treated are very prejudicial to the health of those horses which are compelled to consume them. The north-west boundary of the Burton Hunt extends to Gainsborough, nineteen miles from Lincoln, and the Great Northern railway affords communication between these two places. Market Rasen, on the north-eastern extremity, fifteen miles distant by the road, is accessible also by the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire line. Northward of a parallel line extended from Gainsborough to Market Rasen lies the Brocklesby country, and on the east the South Wold, which traverses south to Tattershall, a town not to be approached from Lincoln much under eighteen miles, by reason of dykes and drains communicating with the river Witham. The Lincolnshire and Boston branch of the Great Northern runs by Tattershall, and a direct line from there to Newark will indicate very nearly the demarcation between this and the

Belvoir boundaries. The river Trent serves as a barrier from the Rufford and the Grove hunts. Lincoln is within convenient distance from Blackmoor Causeway, which is about equi-distant from Newark, Blankney, also approachable from Sleaford, is nearer still to Swinderby Station. Branston, Brattleby, Coleby, Dunholme Gorse, Fiskerton, Glentworth, Harmstone, the Green Man, Hackthorne House, the Eighth Mile Stone on the Spittal Road, North Carlton, Newbold Common, Skellingthorpe, Swallow Beck, Water Dyke Houses, and Wellingore can be reached from Lincoln, to which last-named place Sleaford is also nearly the same distance. The Midland line is negotiable from Newark for Carleton-le-Moorland, Coddington Plantation, and Stapleford Moor, and from Swinderby Station you may reach the Half-way House on the Newark Road and Auborn Village. From Thorpe Station Eagle Wood is within two miles. The Great Northern, by way of Saxelby Station, puts you near Kettlethorpe and Thorney, and Marton Station, Gate Burton, or Normanby-by-Stow. Proceeding to Gainsborough Station, Harpswell Majinmoor, Norton Place, Somerby Hall,

and Thonock House are at hand. There is also a station at Lea. On the Boston branch Bardney Station is the point for Gautby, North Spring Wood, Scot Grove, and Stanfield Hall. The Langworth Station, on the Manchester, Sheffield, and Lincolnshire line, is close to Goltho, Tile House Beck, and Wragby. Wickenby Station serves for East Barkwith, Faldingworth Grange, and Snarford Bridge. Caenby, Legsby, and Linwood Church are near to Maket Rasen. Viewing the country in its aptitudes for foxhunting, it is far above the average; the coverts in some parts are extensive, yet moderate by comparison with what are very commonly met with in the provincials. Taking a survey of the line of road from Leadenham to Lincoln, right and left, there is a fine open expanse, free from woodlands of magnitude, and Wellington, ten miles from Lincoln, and sixteen from Grantham, has the reputation of being one of the crack coverts, but like many others favoured with that distinction, a run is greatly dependent on the line a fox may be pleased to select. If he breaks westward he has a fine grass vale before him, but northward and eastward hounds have to encounter the diffi-

culties appertaining to the arable cultivation adopted on a light soil. The cream of the country lies on the west of a line of road running from the south to the north, midway between Grantham and Brigg, in which Lincoln occupies a central position, and this road may be described as passing through the midst of the country. There is, too, a fine estate at Blankney, halfway between Sleaford and Lincoln, where foxes are fostered with the utmost care by Mr. Chaplin, who occupies the stables at Lincoln which were built by the late Mr. Assheton Smith when he hunted the country. At the time of my visit Mr. Chaplin had taken a trip to Melton, consequently his horses were absent, and I had not the chance of seeing them, which I greatly regretted, as I was informed they are of unusually high character. The extensive property of which Mr. Chaplin is the proprietor affords a most pleasing illustration of what may be accomplished by high farming when conducted by talented, wealthy tenants, under a good landlord. At Mr. King's, of Ashby, also, there is invariably a rare lot of foxes, in the midst of a profusion of game, and the country throughout is well stocked. The long-esta-

blished love for foxhunting, which has existed in Lincolnshire for many generations, would alone prompt the inhabitants to use their best efforts to promote sport; but they have a still further stimulus in the unbounded liberality displayed by Lord Henry Bentinck in every department and detail connected with the establishment and its accessories. As fitting acknowledgments, walks for hounds are in almost unlimited profusion, and as the time arrives all are anxious to receive the most promising of the rising generation of fox-hounds. In this, too, his lordship reciprocates with their sympathies by giving very large premiums for the best puppies when returned from their walks. The fences in this country, as in most others, vary considerably in magnitude; but they are generally far apart, and there is one very distinguishable feature —there are no blind ditches. Many are, it is true, wide and deep; horses, however, can always see what they have to encounter. On remarking this one day in the field to a very extensive agriculturist, regarding me with apparent surprise, he inquired what I meant by a blind ditch? and, upon rendering an explanation, he expressed himself quite astonished

that in any country where the acknowledged process of civilised cultivation of the soil was practised that so much palpable neglect could exist as that of not keeping the ditches open, if only for the important purpose of letting off the water. There is a most gratifying appearance of prosperity about these farms, very clearly displaying the character and condition of the occupants, and by far the greater portion of the attendants at the covert side is composed of agriculturists, well mounted, and affording most pleasing examples of the highly respectable class to which they belong. The impression prevails in many parts of England that horses can only be bred advantageously on grass farms. A visit to Lincolnshire will serve to dispel that delusion, for here they are bred, and to a state of very great perfection. Inexpensive thatched hovels, with yards or outlets constructed with rough timber, afford them shelter from the elements, and security from those casualties which young animals must always be subservient to when permitted to range at large over extensive wilds and wastes. On inquiry I found that many of the horses reared in these parts are purchases from Ireland when quite young.

Events of ancient date serve to identify foxhunting in its legitimate character with this district, though, as in all the other instances, I have failed to discover the precise period of its commencement. I have, however, been enabled to ascertain that Lord Monson's Crier was introduced into the Brocklesby kennels as a sire in the year 1781. This, the third Lord Monson, was born in 1753, therefore he must have commenced as a master of hounds early in life; he kept them till the period of his death, which happened in 1806, when they came into the possession of his son, at that date wanting a few months of his majority. The pack was in high repute with the most talented authorities of the age, who patronised the stallion hounds most extensively—incontestable evidence of the high estimation in which they were held. The huntsman's name was Evans, the first whip Tom Barnes, and the second whip James Wilson, who lived many years with Sir Richard Sutton, by whose liberality a pension was granted when age and infirmities stole upon the veteran servant. The fourth Lord Monson's career was brief indeed; he only survived his father three short

years and a half, leaving an infant son not twelve months old. The country being vacant, and the hounds in the market, a fine opening was in perspective for an enterprising spirit to exercise his talent; and truly enterprising was the candidate for fame. It was Mr. Osbaldeston. The introduction of his name is suggestive of a little digression, for the purpose of giving a sketch, in a collected form, of some of his doings on behalf of fox-hunting, irrespective of what appears in other pages, and I conceive no portion of these “Tours” can be so applicable to the purpose as that which treats of the Burton Country, where he first entered the list as M. F. H. I must, however, confine myself to incidents appertaining exclusively to fox-hunting, for were I to attempt an epitomised version of his other exploits, this volume would be inadequate to the purpose.

When only twenty years of age, in the year 1807, the young Squire commenced with a pack of the Sussex blue mottled harriers, for which, having studied Beckford, he built kennels on his own property, at Hutton Bushell, in Yorkshire. With their pottering style of proceedings and slow pro-

pensities he soon became disgusted, and at the termination of one season he consigned them to the protection of a gentleman less enamoured with the charms of pace. A beautiful pack of dwarf foxhounds, purchased from Lord Jersey, superseded them, and the Squire's comparison of the difference between the two is perfectly characteristic. The latter having started a hare, would quickly run her down to the enlivening chorus, "Here she goes! here she goes!" significant of the sharp squeaking cry of the lively little foxhounds, while the dwelling blue mottles would respond in dull plaintive tones, "Zounds, so she does! zounds, so she does!" Much as he delighted in hunting in its true acceptation, the chase of the hare was scarcely the pastime Mr. Osbaldeston's youthful enterprise would patronise; he possessed more lofty aspirations. Three years' practice with harriers was sufficient to give him a true appreciation of the hunting instincts, inseparable from perfection in a pack of hounds, and it is worthy of remark that a great number of the most distinguished huntsmen have entered to hare. It was rather curiously conceived, when in the zenith of his

fame, that the Squire was indifferent to the faculty in hounds of hunting, in the full acceptation of the term; but that was decidedly a misconception: he hated potterers, it is true—he had experienced too much of that in the blue mottles—but he always knew the value of nose, combined with pace and stoutness.

In the year 1810, Mr. Osbaldeston was the purchaser, for the valuable consideration of 800 guineas, of Lord Monson's pack, and succeeded to the country. The noble lord, his predecessor, devoted much attention to appearances, paying great homage to symmetry and speed, but the brief time he was in possession of the hounds was insufficient to carry his objects into effect. They were distinguished for their rich black, white, and tan colour, so much the fashion in modern times, and they were steady, but not very even.

With the pack, the services of Wilson, their first whip, were secured, and Mr. Osbaldeston hunted them himself; Tom Sebright, then only twenty years of age, was engaged as second whipper-in, with a character from Carter, Sir Mark Sykes's

huntsman, of being a capital horseman, very honest, but a stupid lad; his stupidity, under the tuition of such an accomplished master, very soon graduated into superior talent. His equestrianism was soon exemplified. Mr. Osbaldeston's brother-in-law gave him a very clever but vicious horse, that had kicked him and all his friends off, so Sebright was selected to cultivate his amiabilities. The animal kept kicking all the way to covert, let the distance be what it might, and continued this game for five or six weeks, but never could dispose of Sebright; at last he became tamed, and was a steady and accomplished hunter.

It was Mr. Osbaldeston's good fortune to distinguish himself very early in life by his exquisite discernment of those qualities which are capable of being transmitted from parents to their progeny. It is a gift—a boon, indeed, for which masters of hounds may be truly grateful, seeing how sadly many signally fail in the attempt. When quite in his noviciate he bred Tarquin, a son of Trickster and Duchess, whose rare symmetry and good qualities soon gained a fame that ensured an introduction to the chosen beauties of the

most fashionable kennels. So great was the estimation which this good hound gained, that he was buried in the kennel court at Quorn, with the following significant epitaph:—

TO THE MEMORY OF TARQUIN,
WHO DIED A.D. 1818.

“Beneath this stone my favourite foxhound lies,
Stop, all ye sportsmen, here and wipe your eyes;
Though not the only favourite of the pack,
From him no false alarm, or in his duty slack.”

True enough, he was “not the only favourite of the pack,” Joker, Jovial, and Jason, Joker’s son, were in great estimation as sires, as well as others; and the dashing, daring spirit which Mr. Osbaldeston displayed invoked feelings of wonder and admiration not previously felt in the Burton country. The foxes were wild, and stood a deal of pressing ere the brave pack could tear their jackets, and they were ferocious, too, as reports declare that fat pigs fell victims to their rapacious jaws; not that I vouch for the fact, but I tell the tale as it was told to me. It was in this country, somewhere about the second season of Mr. Osbaldeston’s occupation of it, that Captain White, after a university introduction with the Duke of Beaufort’s

and Sir Thomas Mostyn's Hounds, in Oxfordshire, took his finishing degrees ere he essayed to hold a lead in Leicestershire.

Previously to Mr. Osbaldeston's commencement, the Wragby woodlands, surrounded by grass, had not heard the note of a hound for two seasons, and the foxes, innocent of such polite attentions, were unacquainted with the rules of etiquette, and declined to leave their sylvan territories. There were no earths and the ridings were bad. But difficulties stimulated the Squire in all his actions, whenever a good object was in perspective. Seeing that it was so fine a country, he was determined to teach the foxes better manners. They were numerous and vigorous, and they were constantly visited for five weeks, during which period two of them took refuge in hollow trees, but their forces were only reduced one brace. Perseverance at length prevailed, and to convince an incredulous friend, the Squire betted him a guinea that on hearing his voice or horn one or two would be sure to fly. He told his friend where to station himself, and won the bet. It is reported that in one season forty runs were productive of forty masks for the ken-

nel door, though the Squire himself only acknowledges to thirty-four, and a good share that.

On his resignation of the Burton Hunt Mr. Osbaldeston took his hounds to Thurgarton, in Mr. Musters' country, but did not continue over one season, after which he entered upon the Atherstone, including with it the Sudbury, country, which gave him an opportunity of augmenting his pack by the purchase of Lord Vernon's, in which there were many gems. A more detailed version will be found in the history of the Atherstone Hunt. He had, too, a taste of the Holderness, the Spilsby, the Thurlow, the Hambleton in Hants, the Quorn, the Alconbury Hill, and the Pytchley, making a total of eleven; but he only hunted the Spilsby and the Alconbury Hill countries during the two last months of the respective seasons; the latter by permission of Lord Fitzwilliam. With some of these it is impossible to identify dates; indeed, in several instances, that difficulty is insurmountable, and many most erroneous representations are in circulation concerning the periods of occupation of other countries.

The capabilities of the Quorn and Pytchley were more suited to his taste than any of the others, as well they might be. In 1817 he took possession of Quorn Hall and the appurtenances. He had subsequently a great prize in his kennel, a hound called Rocket, one of the pack purchased from Lord Vernon, and he bred very extensively from him; he was lineally descended from Lord Yarborough's Ranter, thus apostrophised in the Brocklesby kennel book—"Ranter, a very famous hound and stallion; his blood has been always considered as stout, or stouter, than any other in England, in all kennels, especially in Mr. Meynell's and the Burton." He was entered in 1791, the same year as Mr. Meynell's Stormer, a hound, too, of great celebrity, an ancestor of Mr. Osbaldeston's Furrier, who came to the Quorn kennels under those fortuitous circumstances commonly ascribed to luck. It was in 1821, the year in which the Squire's second occupation commenced, when, hunting five days a week, he required a larger entry than his own resources in Yorkshire and elsewhere afforded, so the young draft was secured from Belvoir. The late Duke of Rutland presided over the drafting

of the young hounds himself. Mr. Osbaldeston went to the kennels for the purpose of taking his purchases away, when Jervis, the feeder, who was an excellent judge, pointed out Furrier, saying, "he was the best bred hound in the kennel, and descended from Mr. Meynell's Stormer, but I don't think his Grace will keep him." "Why not?" inquired the Squire; "he is the finest looking hound of the lot." "Yes," replied the feeder, "but his legs are not quite straight, and the Duke won't like him." The presentiment proved true, and Furrier was consigned to the Quorn kennels. Mr. Osbaldeston's version of a frequent cause of crooked legs is quite correct. They are sometimes tied up at quarters, when, struggling to get loose, the evil is produced. Keeping them in confinement will have a similar effect.

Furrier ended his days at Brocklesby, and Rocket, having been ridden over by a man, at a fence, became so alarmed when he approached to one, that he would look back, and if he saw a rider coming, would run off home; so in his older days he was not taken out.

When hunting the Market Harborough side of the country, the Squire and his men, Tom Sebright and Will Head, who was afterwards huntsman to the Cheshire, had a sharp scrimmage with the natives. The hounds ran a fox to ground in what appeared to be a rabbit hole in a covert near a village, full of idle vagabonds, who congregated on the earth, as they are wont to do, in large numbers. The fox was bolted, and the hounds soon tasted him. Whilst this was going on, Head, with the terrier, remained at the earth, and supposing there was some reason for it, Mr. Osbaldeston returned to him. There was a badger in the earth, and the roughs, about twenty in number, with the help of the terrier, got him out, and they had him in a sack. He was clearly not their game; they had already received half-a-sovereign for their trouble, but they would not give him up. Sebright went to them on foot to remonstrate, when one of them knocked him down. He was ordered to mount, when the master and whips charged the mob in line, and floored several. The fellow with the badger in the sack bolted into the gorse, the Squire

after him, upon which the man caught hold of the horse's bridle, but a crack over his hand made him drop the sack, badger and all, which Sebright, securing in triumph, bore away.

It was Mr. Osbaldeston's misfortune, during the second time of his hunting the Quorn country—and the year 1823 would very nearly identify the date—to have his leg broken in a very serious manner. His horse fell with him, at a fence, and the late Sir James Musgrave riding incautiously near, jumped upon him. It was a sad disaster, and, strange to relate, Mr. Osbaldeston's sufferings were not consoled by the sympathies of the baronet who caused them, for Sir James never called upon him during the whole time he was laid up.

Burton, too, who was first whipper-in, after Sebright went to Lord Fitzwilliam's, got a bad fall, from the effects of which he was confined to the house for some time, and his medical attendant pronounced him to be in a deep decline; this occurred when Mr. Osbaldeston was hunting Mr. Musters' country, and residing at Thurgarton. After being for some weeks in this state, the wife of

Mr. Thomas Gisborne, M.P., died under the care of three of the most celebrated physicians of the day, of a complaint similar to that from which Burton was said to be suffering. They were called in to see Burton, and confirmed the opinion of his first attendant, declaring he could not survive a fortnight. Mr. Osbaldeston visited him constantly with kind and anxious solicitude; and after all his doctors had pronounced his case to be hopeless, Burton said one morning, "I am not in a consumption, sir, I can give a view halloo as well as ever;" and he did so. His master told him he might have the advice of any medical man in England. He said he should like to see Doctor Arnold of Leicester, who had attended Mr. Osbaldeston when his leg was fractured. He was called in, and gave the cheering assurance that Burton was no more in consumption than himself, ordered him beef steaks, mutton chops, and port wine. In a fortnight, instead of being carried to his grave, as had been predicted, "Richard was himself again." He lived till the 19th of December, 1862, when he died at Quorn, from the effects of bronchitis. Born at Hallaton, near Market Harborough, he completed

his seventy-first year two months before his death. He was wont to accompany the pack through many a glorious run from the place where no man in his position was more highly respected, and where “now he rests in peace.”

The stoutness of Mr. Osbaldeston’s hounds has always been a subject of admiration. Much of this was attributed to kennel management or feeding; but with that as an accessory, their high breeding was the primitive source. He had two strains of blood, the Rockets and the Furriers, singularly celebrated for their stoutness for many generations. This is essentially one of the very important secrets in breeding hounds of the highest pretensions. Pedigrees must be closely studied to promote success; the perfections of sires and dams are of little avail unless they are inheritances.

The wonderful stoutness of the pack was most severely tested on the 7th or 8th of May, during one of the seasons when Mr. Osbaldeston hunted the Pytchley country, which he entered upon either in 1827 or 1828, having at that time resigned the Quorn to Lord Southampton. The scene was laid in Rockingham forest, acknowledged to be

the finest woodlands in the world. They commence about five or six miles north-east of Market Harborough, and extend, with intervals of open country, nearly to Wansford, a distance approximating twenty miles, though the latter portion is within the jurisdiction of the Honourable George Fitzwilliam's Hunt.

The hounds found their first fox about eleven o'clock, and, with occasional checks, ran for two hours, when they lost. Going to find again, a fox crossed a riding before the hounds, and they set too running him merrily and as fresh as if they had just thrown off. This continued some three hours, when the men's horses tired, and frequent changes of foxes occurred, though luckily the hounds did not divide—a most remarkable circumstance. Impressed with a hope that a fox would leave the woods, the Squire and his whips took it in turns, till the horses of the latter fairly tired, and Mr. Osbaldeston was left alone in his glory. The whole of the field was either beaten or had returned home. Let us sympathise with the plucky Squire, without aid, his own horse scarcely able to simulate a trot, yet hearing, at times, his

hounds running gallantly; admiring their indomitable courage, yet knowing how futile their efforts, with several foxes on foot; anxious to stop them, yet unable to get near enough to accomplish it, when, at seven o'clock in the evening, fortune favoured him. They broke over the open for Bampton wood, near Market Harborough, when a man, hearing the hounds, sallied forth in haste, without the ordinary accompaniments of saddle and bridle, a simple halter doing duty for the latter appendage. The hounds checked about a mile from the forest; seizing this opportunity, the Squire enlisted his new acquaintance in his service, and, supplying the man with his talismanic whip, enstalled him in office, desiring him to get to their heads and stop them. This was accomplished in a workman-like manner, and the well known horn brought the gallant pack to their happy master, who was the more rejoiced when he discovered that only three of his darlings were absent. That they were sadly sore and tired the next morning was a natural consequence; but it was the last day of the season, and a most glorious finale. In the spring of 1834, Mr. Osbaldeston resigned the Pytchley Hunt,

which terminated his brilliant career as a master of foxhounds.

Mr. Walker's hunting career in the Burton country lasted but a short time; he hunted it in 1817. Mr. Foljambe and Mr. Musters had each of them brief occupations. The foxes had then a year or two of respite, when Mr. Assheton Smith awakened the dormant spirit, and built kennels and stables at Lincoln. This gentleman kept it two clear seasons, and about the Christmas of the third, disposed of the pack and possessions to Sir Richard Sutton. In 1823, there were many hounds from Mr. Ward's and Lord Lonsdale's kennels; eleven couples and a half from the former, and four and a half couples from the latter, known to be of gigantic ancestry, and quite consistent with the remarks contained in Mr. Osbaldeston's letter in *Bell's Life* on the 8th of March, 1863. There was, in the year referred to, only one couple from that gentleman's stud hounds; but subsequently a vast number were introduced, and the descendants were very numerous from the Squire's Foiler, Prizer, Vaulter, Sportsman, Tomboy, Fenner, Flourisher, Falstaff, Ferryman, Castor, Rector, Ranter, Vanquisher, and others. It

has already been noticed that to the very great regret of hunting men, Mr. Osbaldeston declined keeping hounds in 1834; so that, after the lapse of a few years, the stud hounds descended from his kennels could only be traced with considerable research and difficulty. Sir Richard Sutton's list for the year he removed from this to the Cottesmore country consisted of eight and a half couples of working hounds, and six couples of unentered hounds from the Brocklesby kennels, whereof one couple and a half were by sires from Mr. Foljambe's, and an equal number from Sir Tatton Sykes's; five couples, bred by Sir Richard, were by Brocklesby sires. There were also seven and a half couples by Belvoir sires, besides two couples from Sir Tatton Sykes's Bajazet; two couples, in their fourth season, by Mr. Osbaldeston's Flasher; one couple, by Mr. Foljambe's Royster and the Rufford Prudence; and two couples and a half by the Vine Grampian. Thus, when Sir Richard Sutton commenced in the Cottesmore country, there were thirty-two couples and a half out of seventy couples, the complement for the season, derived from sources which I have described elsewhere.

The year 1842 inaugurated a fresh dynasty. The late Lord Ducie, from indisposition, found it imperatively necessary to relinquish for a time the mastership of the V.W.H., but with a fond hope, that was, however, never realised, anticipated a renewal of the sport he so dearly loved. His lordship had hunted that country about twelve seasons, and with vast assiduity established a pack of hounds whose attainments were of a very high order, and which he was reluctant to disembody by disposing of them in lots. They were, therefore, transferred to Lord Henry Bentinck, under certain conditions, as I have always understood, the particulars of which, however, it is unimportant to inquire into. This pack was composed of much very valuable blood from the Duke of Beaufort's, Mr. Osbaldeston's, and Mr. A. Smith's kennels. Full-sized hounds Lord Ducie had a great leaning towards, but merit and performances were a *sine quâ non*. To these Lord H. Bentinck subsequently made additions from Mr. Horlock's and Mr. Wyndham's packs, and again at the sale of Mr. Foljambe's Hounds, in 1845, some more very valuable acquisitions were obtained. The blood of the Belvoir, the Brocklesby, the

Grove, and Mr. Osbaldeston's kennels is invariably selected by his lordship. Mr. Foljambe's twin brothers, Herald and Harbinger, whose descendants are so extensively dispersed through the most fashionable kennels of the present day, were in great force a few years prior to the sale. They were the issue of Mr. Osbaldeston's Ranter and Mr. Foljambe's Harpy. Ranter was a son of the Squire's ever-celebrated Furrier and Ruin, Furrier, by the Duke of Rutland's Saladin and his Grace's Fallacy, Saladin a son of Sultan and Golden. Harpy, the dam of Herald and Harbinger, was a daughter of a former Herald, bred by Mr. Foljambe, and Julia, and the last-named Herald was a son of the Duke of Rutland's Hermit, by Saladin out of his Grace's Harpy. I am thus discursive in tracing the pedigree, as it shows that Saladin was the great grandsire of Herald and Harbinger, both in the male and female line; and, although I am quite opposed to close consanguinity in breeding either horses or hounds, it does not appear that in the third generation any injurious or degenerate effects are produced. Lord Henry Bentinck appears to have made another addition to

his forces by a purchase at the sale of the late Sir Richard Sutton's Hounds, in 1855, and the very ample means at his command for obtaining walks have enabled him to breed very extensively. The three brothers—Contest, entered in 1847, Comrade and Craftsman, in 1848—by his lordship's Comus and Sanguine, bred by Mr. Foljambe, have diffused their very excellent and invaluable qualities in many kennels with which I am acquainted. There are many of their descendants in the Duke of Beaufort's, the Cotswold, and Lord Fitzhardinge's kennels. In the latter, Cromwell, a son of Contest, is frequently mentioned by me on other occasions, and he with his numerous family would alone be sufficient to establish the celebrity of the ancestry. Sir Richard Sutton also patronised them considerably, as his list for 1853 contains the names of three couples and a half of Contest's progeny and two couples of Craftsman's. Contest was one of the most perfect hounds I ever saw, certainly excelling the other two in style and symmetry. As many as ten summers are numbered with the past since I had last the opportunity of admiring him, but I still have his fine commanding form

vividly in remembrance. His colour was a good black, white, and tan, with a fine intelligent head, good shoulders, superior legs and feet, capital loins, and that important desideratum, in my estimation, a powerful thigh, in which his progeny resemble him. This rendered him of great value to impart propelling powers, which I too frequently see deficient. He stood full three-and-twenty inches in height, but fortunately his progeny are rather under than over that standard. There was a rare little hound called Hannibal, a son of his and the Berkeley Heroine, in the late North Warwickshire pack, which every observant attendant on those hounds must have known. Corsair, entered in 1853, must also be distinguished with a bright star to his name, as one of the most, if not the most, worthy scions of bygone days. He was a son of the Belvoir Clinker and Redcap, the latter by the Brocklesby Ruler, a hound bred by Mr. Foljambe from his Albion and Rosamond. Clinker was a son of the Brocklesby Rallywood and the Belvoir Caroline, and Mr. Foljambe's Albion was a son of Sifter and Actress.

The list for the current year enumerates eighty-one couples and a half of hounds,

whereof twenty-two couples were entered last autumn, twenty-one couples are in their second season, eleven couples in their third, twelve couples in their fourth, nine couples in their fifth, five and a half in their sixth, and one hound, Benedict, in his sixth season. He was bred by Mr. Foljambe, is a son of his Nectar and Bracelet, bred at Brocklesby from Abelard and Brajela. He is a nice, useful-sized hound. Carver, in his sixth season, a slate-coloured hound, has abundance of power, and is by the Duke of Rutland's Chaser and Torment, a daughter of Crier and Transit. Larkspur, in the fifth season's entry, is a fine level hound, of full size, and on that account well adapted to be the progenitor of a race of daughters; he has a high character in his work, and being a son of Comrade is another recommendation; his dam, Lightsome, appears in the name of Mr. Sutton. Tancred, a very clever black, white, and tan hound, quite the right size, is a son of the Duke of Rutland's Sailor and Twilight, a daughter of Tomboy and Columbine. Cerberus, by Mr. Foljambe's Clasher out of Charmer, is a black and white hound, very active, with capital legs and

perfect feet. Falcon, a rich good black, white, and tan coloured hound, of considerable proportions, is the issue of Sir Richard Sutton's Rambler and Fairmaid ; Rambler, is a son of Trueman and Roguish, and Trueman was by the Duke of Rutland's Trueman and Pastime. Fairmaid was a daughter of Craftsman and Furious. Titus, in the succeeding year's entry, is another son of Sir Richard Sutton's Rambler, and Trinket a daughter of the Duke of Rutland's Comus and Twilight. He is of rather greater size than the average of the pack, nevertheless he is short on his legs, and his colour is a recommendation. Foeman, a very smart, active, nicely proportioned black and white hound, is a son of Rhoderick and Fairmaid, the dam of Falcon. Rhoderick is descended from Mr. Foljambe's Royster. Proctor, a compact, useful hound, is a son of the Duke of Rutland's Chaser and Priestess, one of the late baronet's Rambler family. Dorimont, in his third season, is another representative of Rhoderick and Daffodil, a daughter of the Duke of Rutland's Chaser. This hound possesses vast power and length, with remarkably clever shoulders, and his colour is

good. This closes the enumeration of stud hounds; next year will include Rector, Regulus, and Regent, descended from Titian and Ringworm, a daughter of Contest and Rakish, by Mr. Foljambe's Royster and Rantipole, Royster, by the Duke of Rutland's Bluecap. Rector is a dark black and tan hound, over three-and-twenty inches; he has length and style, and may be described as a fine, commanding hound. The two brothers are more compact, black and white, with very little, if any, tan about them; they are, in my estimation, just the right size. Of the two I should select Regulus, the muscular development of his thighs being conspicuous, though many, I believe, prefer his brother Regent. Of the same year, Tartar, son of Falcon and Tinsel, is a fine, powerful, showy hound, with a great deal of character. Palafox, descended from Corsair and Problem, is a very splendid representative of his sire, quite justifying any encomiums. Problem is a daughter of Sir Richard Sutton's Potentate, one of his Trueman family. Plunder is also a son of Corsair and Priestess, a nice hound, but not having the power of his kindred.

There is much, indeed, to admire in the

other sex, and Redbreast, a black, white, and tan daughter of the Grove Rector and Roguish, in her fourth season, stands very prominently on my list. Phyllis and Proserpine, descended from Cardinal and Pliant, are particularly clever, with rare legs and feet. Among the dog-hounds in their first season Trumpeter and Traitor, Bondsman and Brusher, Potentate and Pandarus, and also Woodman denote the judgment that has been exercised in the breeding department of these kennels.

Lord Henry Bentinck's stud is a most extensive and valuable one. Perhaps few, if any, masters of hounds give more liberal prizes. It matters not what the distance may be, if a horse of very first-rate qualities is on sale, his lordship is very likely to become a customer. There are upwards of seventy, and all of very great pretensions, under the care of Leatherdale, a most intelligent servant. The stables are about a mile from Lincoln, and consist of loose boxes, principally in compartments of two or three boxes in each, and every species of accommodation, comfort, and convenience that skill can devise and money procure has been introduced. A remarkably well-arranged covered ride affords shelter for exercise in the

winter and most commodious accommodation for summering. Thus there is no necessity for one of two alternatives which exist where no such convenience is provided — that of sending horses to exercise on cold rainy mornings, or of keeping them confined in the stable. Among the novelties of the day are the Turkish baths, which his lordship has given a fair trial with success. They are so constructed as to admit eight horses to the process simultaneously. On the advantages of these baths opinions are very much at issue, but theory must condescend to bow at the shrine of practice. Judiciously used there can be little doubt of their efficacy ; as, for example, after a severe day's work, to dispel the rigidity of the muscles and the latent fever that exists, the effects are described as restoring the appetite, and not enervating the system. The process consists in submitting the animals to a heated atmosphere, well regulated by ventilation, and after a certain time the horse is removed into an adjoining apartment, where a jet of water is thrown over him by means of a flexible india-rubber tube, when he is quickly scraped and clothed, and removed into his stable to rejoice after the

luxuries of the operation. A very important practice is adopted in these stables which may prove of much public benefit; it is the application of mustard mixed with turpentine on the throats of horses having inclination to that prevailing disorder roaring. Those so affected are found to be very greatly relieved by using the application the day before hunting, and I have been assured that confirmed cases of roaring have been cured by persevering with the plan.

It sometimes occurs that in selecting the most favourite country to see hounds, disappointment ensues, and they have no sport; and, on the other hand, that from some unfashionable place they have a capital run. This was my fate with these hounds. Wellington takes precedence in favour, but it was a very bad scenting day to begin with, when I went there, otherwise there was a good fox, though he took a line over the lightest portion of the country in the direction of Leadenham. The hounds hunted the line with wonderful industry and perseverance into the borders of the Duke of Rutland's country, and there almost appeared to be a very feeble line of scent into a covert, but in all probability

his lordship's considerations of etiquette prompted him not to proceed, and they were taken to Blakeney, in expectation of finding a fox accustomed to enjoy himself in the sunny expanse of some turnip fields, but his haunt was not discovered. This, however, afforded me an excellent opportunity of admiring the agricultural condition of this fine estate, which has been already mentioned. On returning to Wellingore another fox was found, but he had no inclination to extend his travels far from the covert, though that was sufficiently distant to enable him to escape. Another attempt to see a day's sport at Langworth was equally unsuccessful from want of scent; still the hounds persevered most marvellously, and there is no doubt, when that important element exists, their hunting powers are most exquisite.

CHAPTER V.

THE COTSWOLD HOUNDS AND COUNTRY.

There are but few sportsmen of the present age who take an interest in the arrangements of hunting countries that are not aware that the late Earl Fitzhardinge hunted this district and the neighbourhood of Berkeley alternate months, up to the time of his decease, which event took place in October, 1857; and that his successor, Sir Maurice Berkeley, continued to hunt it to the close of that season. The late Earl, then Colonel Berkeley, commenced in or about 1808, and was consequently a master of hounds wanting but one year to complete the almost unprecedented period of half a century. When Colonel Berkeley first introduced his pack at Cheltenham, that place was of comparative insignificance. The High-street and the Old Well-walk comprised the only fashionable pro-

menades, where invalids, real and imaginary, did homage to Hygeia, and drank the waters, then rising in fame, to overcome dyspepsia, dispel hypochondriasis, and create appetites for their breakfasts. These orgies, however, were confined to the summer months, and during the winter season Cheltenham was but a deserted village. The celebrity of Colonel Berkeley's hounds soon began to spread, and drawing the coverts successfully in the surrounding country, Cheltenham simultaneously drew company within its precincts. That which was only a place of fashionable resort in summer, presented attractions during the winter, and sporting fathers of families estimating the enjoyments of society, preferred taking a house in the rising town to a hunting-box in a secluded neighbourhood, or perchance residing at the paternal mansion in a provincial district; the opportunities, too, of introducing aspiring sons and daughters fair were matters of no slight importance. One of the most attractive features of fox-hunting is the social character with which it is so charmingly connected, and this is the more striking since it has become the fashion for ladies to grace the hunting-field with their

presence. The gay scene at the place of meeting is rendered infinitely more animating when parties of the fair sex are in attendance, and equestrianism is an accomplishment now as much in favour as the refined elegancies of the ball-room.

What a lasting debt of gratitude do the inhabitants of Cheltenham owe to the late noble peer. The name of Berkeley ought to be, and doubtless is, deeply engraven on the hearts of those who possess inherent interests and affections for the welfare of the place. That it would not have arisen from its original insignificance there can be no doubt; but that it would have risen to its present eminence in the same space of time, or possibly for half a century to come, without the patronage and support of the late earl, is very doubtful. The arrival of the hounds the alternate months, accompanied by a stud consisting of some sixty or seventy hunters, was an event which occasioned considerable effect and excitement.

When Sir Maurice Berkeley resigned in the spring of 1858 to the sporting inhabitants of Cheltenham, to those who resorted there for the sake of hunting, to the tradesmen who

were aware of the importance of a pack of hounds, and to the farmers, still more interested, it became a matter of considerable anxiety what gentleman they could prevail upon to take the country. Following a master of hounds who had gained so much fame, and who had been so exceedingly liberal in every matter connected with foxhunting as the late Earl Fitzhardinge, it required some resolution in any one to become his successor. There are few hunts more dependent on the farmers for the preservation of foxes and other subjects connected with the sport than this; there is none in which foxhunting is more enthusiastically supported by that influential class. They attend to the safety and rearing of cubs with the greatest assiduity, and the merest whisper of a suspicion, could such an unhappy delusion ever enter any silly pate, of enlarging a "bagman," or resorting to any unsportsmanlike device, to make it appear they had a legitimate fox in the covert, if they had not one, would be repudiated by them with the utmost indignation.

C. F. Cregoe Colmore, Esq., a gentleman of well-known repute as a sportsman, whose residence at Cheltenham afforded opportuni-

ties of knowing that he was in every respect qualified to undertake the responsibilities of the master of the hounds, was unanimously requested to accept the office. After much persuasion from his friends, and especially from the farmers, who offered to afford him every assistance in their power, he at length consented. To engage a huntsman was Mr. Colmore's next step, and he was not long in coming to a decision. Charles Turner, who had whipped in seven seasons to Harry Ayris, and who, therefore, knew the country, and was likewise known in it, was applied to, and no impediment was placed against his preferment. After serving an apprenticeship under so able a professor as Ayris, it was reasonable to expect he would be quite capable of performing the duties attendant on his promotion; and those hopes have been fully realised. Previously to Turner's engagement with Earl Fitzhardinge he had whipped in to Mr. Thackwell, in the Ledbury country, having performed the same office some six or seven seasons for Mr. Cliffe, Mr. Thackwell's predecessor. Tired of single blessedness he found favour with Ayris's second daughter. The numerous wedding gifts they had presented

to them on the occasion of their marriage, which took place in the summer of 1860, which presents they very gratefully acknowledge, is evidence of the good feeling evinced towards them; and as Mrs. Turner seems to be as fond of hunting as her husband, it is to be hoped “so good a sort” will be perpetuated.

Fortune smiled with respect to hounds. Lord Gifford had determined to resign the V. W. H., and Mr. Colmore became the purchaser of the pack. His lordship formed it about fourteen years previously, commencing in the Ludlow country, whence he took his hounds into the H. H., or Hampshire Hunt, where he kept them three seasons; after that into Herefordshire, and from there to the Vale of White Horse. To these Mr. Colmore made an addition at Mr. Farquharson’s sale by purchasing four couple at the liberal bidding of 135 guineas, of which two couples of very superior bitches, and one dog-hound—Bosphorus—were at work in 1860; but the latter, it should be observed, was not bred by Mr. Farquharson, being a son of Mr. Morrell’s celebrated Bosphorus and Mr. Greave’s Lively. With the exception of those purchased by

Mr. Henry Villebois, I never saw Mr. Farquharson's hounds. Those I had opportunities of meeting when at Badminton cub hunting, the Duke of Beaufort having granted the use of his coverts for that purpose. In their work they were superlatively good from find to finish; carrying a capital head, and always turning on the line with wonderful precision, yet full of dash and courage. On the flags I could not say so much in their praise; but on account of their extraordinary working qualities, judiciously crossed they are invaluable to breed from.

On making application to be permitted to see the hounds in kennel, the favour was most courteously granted, and Mr. Colmore did me the honour to meet me. The interest which the farmers take in the success of the pack, and the esteem they entertain for Mr. Colmore, cannot be more thoroughly corroborated than by the number of puppies they walk for him. This year's entry contains eight couples and a half bred at these kennels, more than may be found in many establishments of longer standing, where the masters exercise a command of walks on their landed estates. With the exception of one couple

bred at the late Earl Fitzwilliam's kennels, the remaining portion of the entry were bred at Sir Maurice Berkeley's. Commencing with the entry are two couples—Wisdom, Wamba, Wishwell, and Winsome—descended from Sir Maurice Berkeley's Cromwell and Mr. Farquharson's Welcome, by his Regent and his Winsome, a very fine bitch, with much elegance, and one of Mr. Colmore's fortunate purchases. This is a most promising litter, resembling their sire most unmistakably both in colour—a light grey pie—and symmetry. Cromwell, it must be remembered, is a son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest, who with his brothers, Comrade and Craftsman, have so very frequently come under my observation as sires. The next litter on the list, consisting of two and a half couples, are the progeny of Albion and Rhoda, a daughter of Earl Fitzwilliam's Hero. The most perfect in symmetry of these is Albert; but the best character in work is awarded to Abelard, though I thought him rather a short hound, and perhaps a trifle thick in his shoulders. Roderick, a badger pied hound, and Rapid, his sister, both very useful, are the issue of Adjutant, formerly in Lord

Gifford's pack, but bred at the Berkeley kennels, and Redwing, a powerful roomy favourite from Mr. Farquharson's. Chaser, Carver, and Comfort, the issue of Albion and Cymbal, follow in the list; the first-named is spoken of as a most resolute hard worker. Aimwell and Awful were the next presented —the latter decidedly the gem of the entry; and on looking her over, I observed she was just the sort that would find favour with Mr. George Montagu, and all who know what an excellent judge of hounds he is, and how fastidious to please, will accept the description without much further comment; but I must not content myself without doing her ample justice. She is a handsome hare pied bitch, about 22 inches, short on the legs, which are capital, powerful over the loins, with an elegant, intelligent head, light clean neck, and good shoulders. She is a daughter of Albion and Riddle, and on referring back in the list the “riddle” was solved, Riddle being by Lord Portsmouth's Waverley and Mr. Wheble's Racket; and it is well known that Mr. Montagu had great influence in Mr. Wheble's kennels. A smart-looking black, white, and tan hound, Bouncer, by the Heythrop Pro-

digal and Bellflower, bred at Berkeley, and Brusher, by Lord Fitzwilliam's Batchelor and his Frolicsome, are two useful hounds; and a black and white bitch, Primrose, daughter of the Heythrop Prodigal and Lady, an inmate of the Berkeley kennels, is remarkably neat and elegant.

I must now try back—a proceeding at times as imperative with the pen as with the pack—in order to make good the line. In the list the name of Active, sister to Awful, appears; but she had met with a singular and untimely death. The whippers-in were walking out the hounds, when she slipped away from them unobserved at the moment, and before she was missed and her whereabout discovered, had got to a tub of wash which was sunk into the ground, and having fallen in, head foremost, was drowned. What makes this loss still more to be regretted, it was for rearing her that the first prize—a silver cup presented by Mr. Colmore—was awarded to Mr. Charles Cooke, of Taddington. The second prize, a silver liquor stand, was given to Mr. Edward Griffiths, of Marle Hill, for walking Wamba. Among the working hounds were several old acquaintances which I knew

when in Lord Gifford's possession. Nonsuch, in her seventh season, is one—a rare sort, as her name implies; she is a daughter of his lordship's especial favourite, Neighbour, a truly splendid hound; in style and character much resembling Lord H. Bentinck's Contest, but with more tan about him, and he had a remarkably fine coat, in which his progeny generally resemble him. This hound's blood ought not to be lost sight of; he was a son of the Berkeley Wamba and Novelty; Wamba was descended from Hotspur and Waspish; Novelty by Lord Fitzwilliam's Mentor. There are two couples more of his progeny in these kennels—Novelty, a five season hunter; also Norman, Nimrod, and Nancy, in their second season. Norman is rather a light coloured hound, but with a great powerful frame, a good head, well set on, and has capital shoulders; Nimrod, too, is a fine slashing hound; Nancy is a particularly fine, lengthy, and powerful bitch, unmistakably resembling her sire. Crinoline, one of this year's entry, by Sir Maurice Berkeley's Cromwell and Nonsuch, is remarkably good-looking, but being too small, is to be drafted; Lucy, the same age as Nonsuch, bred in Mr. Wheble's

kennels, daughter of the Craven Larkspur and Rosalind, maintains the good character she acquired in Lord Gifford's estimation for being true to the line, and never doing wrong; Adjutant, bred by the late Earl Fitzhardinge, descended from Abelard and Cruel; Streamer, a good worker, by the Earl's Boxer out of Mr. Pryse's Songstress; Boaster, bred by Lord Gifford, by Boaster and Abbess; Percival, by Lord Henry Bentinck's Champion out of Sir W. W. Wynne's Proserpine; Bosphorus, whose descent is previously noticed; Ringwood, son of Earl Fitzhardinge's Factor and his Rapture, compact, powerful, and perhaps the largest through the heart, of any hound in the kennel; Painter, son of Earl's Ferdinand and his Perjury; Royal, son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Rambler and Sir Maurice Berkeley's Beeswing; with Rallywood, by the late Sir Richard Sutton's Rambler and Sir Maurice Berkeley's Hecuba, have been, or will be, destined to the honour of perpetuating their race. All of them, with the exception of Bosphorus, Royal, and Rallywood, were entered by Lord Gifford. The total complement in the kennel is 54 couples, 14 couples of which were entered

this season. They are drawn for their work in two packs, according to size, mixed in either case, but there is very little disparity; the average height is about 23 inches, and, judging by the eye, I do not think there are three inches between the loftiest of the dog-hounds and the lowest of the other sex.

The kennels, which are on the outskirts of the town, on the right of the road leading to Prestbury, are the same which Earl Fitzhardinge occupied the alternate months for many years. Without any ostentatious display of architecture they are sufficient for the purpose, and what is of the greatest importance, they are sound. The stables adjoin, and contain twenty-two very superior horses for the use of the men, ten of which are devoted to the huntsman, who has always a second horse out. Mr. Colmore's hunters, seven or eight in number, are kept at his private stables, near his residence. Through the extreme kindness of Mr. Colmore, who most obligingly offered me a mount — a favour for which I feel deeply indebted—I was enabled to see his hounds in work one day last month, when they met at Withington, seven miles from Cheltenham. Absence from a country

of only a very few years effects a marvellous change in the respective persons who compose the field. Many old friends and familiar faces were not present, while the vacuum was replaced with fresh ones. Some, perchance, the grim huntsman, who never misses his game, has run to their last earth; others have sought a distant hunt to enjoy their venatic pastime. From the ranks of the latter I missed Mr. Penrose, one of the best men over a country I ever saw. Although a welter weight he was always with the hounds, turning with them as if his horse formed one of the pack, yet never inadvertently overriding them. It was truly gratifying, however, to meet many who were constant attendants when Earl Fitzhardinge hunted the country. Of these was Mr. Pryse Lewis, a leading man for many years, looking well, and affording pleasing confirmation of the salutary and invigorating effects of foxhunting. Mr. Findon, too, whose opinions concerning horses and hounds are always valuable and instructive, but whom early reminiscences connect with Warwickshire, has for several years made Cheltenham his place of abode. Always well mounted, and determined to secure a place in

the first rank, Captain Lloyd Evans was at the place of meeting; and Mr. Barton, who has lost nothing in weight since he first undertook the mastership of the staghounds. Mr. Dangerfield, who seems seldom disposed to cherish infelicitous reflections, complained grievously of the deep state of the country, and indeed not without cause. Mr. Robert Chapman, mounted, as usual, on a select specimen from his choice collection, carefully calculated the chances of a cold bath in the event of the hounds crossing with a blazing scent the overflowing brook below Cleevely, very judiciously suggesting a place where some posts and rails on the taking offside would indicate to his horse the propriety of jumping; although, as will be described hereafter, the hounds did cross, as they were not running at any pace I do not think Mr. Chapman found it necessary to experimentalize. Mr. George Fletcher was looking not much older than when I first knew him, nor much changed in any respect—certainly not in his enthusiasm for hunting, or his proverbial hospitality; and he had two sons in the field, his most worthy representatives. There were also several other “Cotswolders,” with whom

time has dealt indulgently. Mr. James Walker's good-tempered countenance proclaimed that he was not very much encumbered with care, and his increased weight approaches nearly to that of his late respected brother, whose sons now supply his place at Compton. Mr. Handy looked none the worse for the celebrity he has gained for his sheep ; and Mr. Powell, muffled up in a great coat and comforter (apparently composed of about half the fleece of a cotswold), inculcated the idea that he had commenced wasting to ride in the Grand National, which is to come off at Cheltenham. Of strangers there were many, so many that it would be impossible to name a tithe of them ; I must, therefore, with every due apology to those whom I have omitted, confine myself to the names of Mr. Owen and Captain Gurney, as distinguished performers with hounds.

The morning was foggy, but it cleared at intervals, and eventually became fine ; wind due west. At twenty minutes before twelve o'clock the hounds found in Cleevely, a covert belonging to Mr. George Fletcher, where, as there was not much lying, the fox had no alternative but to break at once, which he

did at the upper end, with the pack in a body, and apparently on good terms; but this did not last long, for the hounds had scarcely settled to the scent when the fox was headed, which occasioned a check. Hitting off the scent, the brook, which was bank full, had to be crossed, some of the field selecting a ford, which nearly produced a swim for undersized ones, others availed themselves of a bridge. It soon became apparent that there were two foxes on foot, and it subsequently transpired that one of them broke covert at the opposite end simultaneously as the one the hounds had found left at the other. As they crossed each others line this at first caused some perplexity, but at length settling to a fair though by no means a brilliant scent, they hunted it very nicely nearly to Foxcot, to the right, crossing the Withington road to Withington village, where the pace began to improve, and passing through Compton village, Star Wood appeared to be the point; but the hounds divided, one portion, eleven couples, bearing to the left, with a splendid country before them, the other nine couples and a half running for Star Wood. Mr. Colmore and

Ben Painting, the head whip, were with the first-named division. Turner and Russell, the under whip, with those which went to Star Wood. The field was divided in about equal proportion with the hounds, and I was fortunate enough to turn with those which kept the open. To have stopped either when the division occurred was impossible, and with so fine a country as the one over which they were running when it might have been accomplished, Mr. Colmore considered it more judicious to let them persevere. Leaving Stowel Grove on the right and Northleach on the left after crossing the Cirencester road, the fox, inclining to the right, as if Bibury were his point, reached Coln St. Dennis, where the hounds ran the scent well up to a small and very open plantation, where they suddenly checked. A sheepdog had unfortunately caught sight of the fox and chased him. After several ineffectual casts, the hounds hit upon a very stale scent, scarcely sufficient for them to speak to, which they worked most patiently and industriously to a small spinney, and on entering it got up to their tired fox, as he had evidently waited for them. The keen eye

of Mr. Pitt instantly recognised his being in difficulties, as at some distance on the opposite bank he left the covert, when the hounds again went to work in earnest, and brought the line back to the lower end of Stowle Park, after crossing which they made a sudden turn to the right. On getting out of the park, hearing hounds running merrily on my left, I steered my course in that direction, and soon discovered that I had got to the other portion of the pack, and ascertained when they divided this lot hunted the line through Star Wood to Withington and Chedworth Woods, where they had been ringing the changes with various foxes all day. Turner was in the act of getting his hounds together when they hit upon the scent of a fox that had gone away unobserved, and the little detachment settling down, ran him a pretty scurry to Compton, where fortunately they fell in with the remainder of the forces. The latter had taken their fox from Stowle Park to Hangman's Stone, and on to Puzedown, from whence he worked his way back and got into a drain at Mr. Walker's at Compton. The hounds so well deserved him that Mr. Colmore deter-

mined on having him out, and forthwith tools went to work in earnest ; hitting on the right spot the men were not long in getting sight of his brush. A labourer, ambitious to display his talent, undertook to draw him, and having seized the brush, passed the thong of a hunting whip under the fox's body as he drew him from the drain, and got it up to the shoulders, but, in struggling, the animal slipped his body through the thong, and, thus getting his head at liberty, fixed his fangs severely in his assailant's right hand as the said hand was about to secure his captive by the neck. The artistic plan under such circumstances is to draw the fox by his brush and hind legs with the left hand, and, passing the right along his back, seize him by the neck the instant his ears are visible. On the fox being turned down and the hounds laid on, after threading a hedge and turning short to the right, he evidently hoped to gain a sanctuary in his well-known haunts in Compton Dingles, but he had travelled too far, and was too much exhausted with his incarceration in the drain, to accomplish his purpose, and the hounds despatched him at twenty-five minutes past

four. If, therefore, we allow a quarter of an hour occupied in getting him out of the drain, this gallant *protégé* of Mr. George Fletcher's stood before the pack four hours and a half. Had it not been for the unfortunate circumstance of the sheep-dog coursing the fox, or had the pack not divided, with the assistance of their huntsman there is no doubt they would have finished him off sooner. All were highly pleased with the day's sport, if, perhaps, we except a few who followed the division to the woods; and Mr. Walker's bread and cheese and ale, which were liberally proffered, became very acceptable. It was a severe day for hounds, quite sufficient to test their condition, and they all came home with their sterns over their backs. The land rode exceedingly heavy, and some places, naturally sound, almost approached to the character of bogs.

The expense of hunting this country, as it is done by Mr. Colmore, must be considerable, for no limit is observed in matters connected with the main object, that of offording sport. Indeed, the charges attendant on the preservation of foxes in the items of fees to keepers, earth stopping, and dinners, are very

great, amounting to as much as in some of the minor provincials is devoted to the entire expenditure and maintenance of horses, hounds, and servants. It possesses an advantage in not having any railway immediately intersecting it, although it is nearly surrounded by railways, and the places of meeting are within a reasonable distance of Cheltenham, with the exception of those in the Broadway country, to which the hounds are always conveyed in a van. It is well supplied with foxes, and every effort is used both by landed proprietors and farmers to co-operate with Mr. Colmore in promoting sport.

CHAPTER VI.

A DAY ON THE FLAGS IN 1862.

The annual assemblage of the *cognoscenti* to inspect the entry of young hounds for the ensuing season, in whom so much of the huntsman's fondest hopes are centered, is invariably an event of much interest, never perhaps greater than in the present instance, as in addition to those bred by Mr. Cregoe Colmore, he has secured a very considerable increase from Badminton. The object on these occasions is to award the pieces of plate provided by Mr. Colmore for those persons who have lent their aid to the good cause, and who have succeeded in rearing the most promising young hounds. Three of those very acceptable and highly appreciable presents were in readiness to be presented, for the best, the second best, and the third best of the entry. The custom of giving prizes for these purposes is happily on the increase,

and we can scarcely conceive a more gracious and popular feature, calculated, as it is, to promote improvement in the future excellence of a pack of foxhounds. This applies particularly in subscription countries, where the master is not blessed with an extensive command of walks, though indeed where that is the case, these friendly mementoes are not without their uses. They tend very greatly to promote harmony, which is inseparable from success in the hunting-field, and they will often make converts of those who have previously been indifferent, and instigate them to zealous friendship. Many a farmer, who may not be a foxhunter, is stimulated by the hope of gaining a cup or other piece of plate, and cheerfully keeps a couple of hounds in the best possible condition—very probably is eventually entered to the noble science—breeds a hunter, and makes his appearance at the covert side. But it goes further than that, a silver teapot or cream-jug has charms in the estimation of a wife or daughter, who regard the rising generation of the canine race with infinitely more sympathy and affection than when there is nothing in perspective to gloss over the little peccadilloes to which youth is

ever prone. There is nothing more calculated to destroy the temper of young hounds, and thereby render them valueless, than the inconsiderate abuse they often encounter where they are regarded as unwelcome guests. Judge Clark, of the Badminton, and Judge Ayris, of the Berkeley, presided at this very pleasing tribunal, where it became their duty, so to speak, to reverse the usual order of things, so that, instead of condemning criminals, they had a far more delightful office in adjudicating on those most worthy of distinction. For this they had opportunities, if necessary, of calling to their aid authorities from the surrounding circuits. Professor Tipton, of the Vale of White Horse; Professor Mawe, of the Worcestershire; Professor G. Hills, of the Herefordshire; with Professor Ward, who took venatic degrees in Cambridgeshire, were all present, and ready to elucidate the most knotty points of fox-hound proportions, physiological properties, or any of the abstruse questions incidental to the mysteries of canine perfections. The entry consisted of ten couples, six couples being the produce of two sisters, Opal and Ornament, descended from Lord Yarborough's

Orator and Lord Fitzhardinge's Caustic. Opal produced two litters last season, the first in March, and the second in October, but, unfortunately, she will have no more, in consequence of an injury she sustained by being run over by a train. During the very learned deliberation, Judge Ayris was observed with his spectacles, not in the usual place, where it is generally supposed they are worn for the purpose of increasing the power of the visual organs, but in a position high up on his forehead ; it will, therefore, be presumed that he was able to dispense with these valuable appurtenances, and the *fiat*, quite in accordance with general opinion, was pronounced by the two judges in favour of Stormer, a son of Mr. Morrell's Bajazet and Saraband, a daughter of the Warwickshire Saffron. The very hospitable treatment this young hound had received at the hands of Edward Griffiths, Esq., of Marle Hill, contributed greatly to the development of his powers, and on the tape being tried round him he was found to measure twenty-nine inches. The second honours were awarded to Factor, son of the excellent, but unfortunate Opal and the Duke of Beaufort's Finder. The plate will find its way to John W. Wil-

son, Esq., of Springfield, Broadway, and it will be a piece of great ill-luck if that excellent sportsman and very liberal supporter of foxhunting has not soon several more trophies to bear it company ; with patriotic spirit, as a volunteer, he is now walking one couple of young hounds for the Berkeley kennels, another couple for the Cotswold, and for the Heythrop a single hound, which would have been a couple if Jem Hills had not sent all the rest out, previously to Mr. Wilson making the offer. The third prize was given to Guilty, daughter of Glider and Ornament, walked by Mr. Bayliss, of Winchcombe.

Much as I feel disposed to do justice to the entry by enlarging on the excellence of individuals, I must content myself with mentioning the names of Prior, Saucebox, sister to Stormer, General, brother to Guilty, and the three puppies, Opal's last litter, which are remarkably clever, and when furnished will no doubt attain good size. Judging of the draft from the Duke of Beaufort's, with reference to those which have found favour in his Grace's estimation, they must be superlatively good.

There are few counties so highly favoured

as Gloucestershire, as it is well known the past and present generation of the noble families of Beaufort and Berkeley have hunted the greater portion of the county with princely liberality a vast number of years. Mr. Colmore hunts the Cotswold side, and during the time he has been master he has gained universal popularity and its concomitant, support. As instance of all this, the Duke of Beaufort's hounds, during the season of 1861 and '62, killed ninety-one brace of foxes; but as half his Grace's country is in Wiltshire, I will assign a moiety of the foxes to that county. Lord Fitzhardinge's hounds killed eighty-five brace, Mr. Colmore's forty-nine and a-half brace, the Vale of White Horse thirty-two and a-half, and supposing sixteen brace appertained to Gloucestershire, and the remainder to Wiltshire, there is a total of about one hundred and ninety brace, which I think exceeds the number of foxes killed in any other county of equal extent in England; and, what is more, they are not exhausted, as there are fourteen more litters in the Duke of Beaufort's country than there were the previous year.

CHAPTER VII.

THE COTTESMORE COUNTRY AND SIR JOHN
TROLLOPE'S HOUNDS.

Surrounded by the most distinguished countries, of which the sporting spirit of England is so justly proud, it would be passing strange if the Cottesmore did not participate in most of their perfections. Nay, more, it rejoices in some advantages which are wanting in other places, Woodlands, wherein the future hopes of the pack can be initiated in the mysteries of the chase, which all masters of hounds know how to appreciate; yet in the adjoining country, called High Leicestershire, comparatively there are none, while in many of the provincials they are far too numerous. The happy medium is seldom enjoyed; that happy medium, however, most unequivocally applies to the Cottesmore country, where those essential agents

of foxhunting are sufficiently numerous and extensive to contribute their best effects, without the entailment of those dull passages of sport commonly attributed to densely-wooded districts. In these favoured coverts you have constant opportunities of admiring the beautiful instincts of hounds portrayed to the utmost advantage, from the first exciting challenge to the still greater enthusiasm when the pack, in full chorus, settles to the scent of the flying fox as he gallantly braves the dangers of an open country. Then, again, the coverts are not in such close proximity as to interfere with those stirring incidents which are attendant on a burst. Neither are the fences, with few exceptions, of impracticable magnitude; the fields are large, and occasionally stone walls, of moderate pretensions, diversify the interest, and a brook is sometimes found to weed the field, affording hounds opportunities of slipping from the crowd, to the excusable delight of masters and huntsmen. The Duke of Rutland exercises the right of occupying the country on the north; the Hon. George Fitzwilliam and the Pytchley divide the prerogative of the south; while eastward of Market Deep-

ing and Bourn there is a tract of fen which horses cannot cross; westward, a portion of that which in former days was claimed by this hunt has been conceded to Mr. Tailby, the road from Uppingham, through Oakham, to Melton, as nearly as may be, affording a demarcation. Facilities of transit are presented by the Great Northern Railway, and at Tallington or Stamford station the wandering sportsman will find himself at available distance from Casewick and Uffington Wood. Stamford, too, will be found handy for Tickencote and Empingham Wood; Ryhall station for Tollthorpe Oaks, Pickworth, Horn Lane Tollbar, Greetham New Inn, Clipsham, Careby, Witham-on-the-Hill, Carlby Mill, or Thurlby. There is, likewise, a station at Little Bytham, close to the kennels, from whence Manthorpe, Edenham, Grimsthorpe Castle, Hanthorpe, Stocken Hall and Park House may be reached. Corby station is the point for Irnham House, Burton Coggles, Colsterworth, Swayfield, The Bull, and Witham Common. The Midland Railway, traversing from Stamford to Oakham, gives opportunities of visiting the western portion of the country. From Luffenham you reach Forster's Bridge,

Witchley Warren, Normanton Lodge; and from Manton station Wing, Lyndon or Egleton. Oakham station is in proximity to Burley Park, Exton Park, Whitwell, Cottesmore, Barrow, and Market Overton.

The preservation of foxes in this hunt is generally respected, though perhaps they may not in some places be quite so abundant as could be wished; but they are of a fine wild race, five brace of which are worth more than fifteen brace of short-running brutes, whose voyages of discovery have never extended many fields from the woods in which they were bred; many of the Cottesmore foxes, like those in the Hon. George Fitzwilliam's country, are stub bred, adding further confirmation of a practice I have for many years advocated, that of breaking up all breeding earths.

This hunt may well be proud of three of the most magnificent places of meeting that can be found throughout Her Majesty's dominions. Exton Park, the seat of Earl Gainsborough, Grimsthorpe Castle, the truly noble property of Lord Willoughby d'Eresby, and Burley Park, the charming residence of G. Finch, Esq. Burley Park is on the

western confines, two miles only from Oakham, and would be better distinguishable as Burley-on-the-Hill. This mansion was erected upwards of a century ago by the Earl of Nottingham, and is a most spacious and superb specimen of architecture. The park is extensive, and adorned with the mighty oak and other venerable specimens of forest timber. Grimsthorpe Castle is situated nearly on the northern extremities of the Cottesmore country, and, standing on an elevated site, produces impressive effects when seen from a considerable distance. Part of the castle is said to have been erected as early as the reign of Henry III., and considerable additions were made during the reign of Henry VIII. by the Duke of Suffolk, in order to entertain his sovereign in his progress through this part of the kingdom. The park is of vast extent, and in it the monarchs of the forest rejoice in venerable antiquity and majestic growth; nor are the antlered monarchs less cared for, as is manifest by a fine herd of red deer, while foxes are preserved by the head keeper with the utmost precaution, and as the boundaries of the Cottesmore country are not extensive, the

strictest attention to the welfare of the fox family is of the utmost importance.

The first master of hounds in this country of whom tradition speaks was the Hon. Mr. Noel, who must have been a master of hounds as early as the middle of the eighteenth century. My authority for this is an entry in the kennel book at Belvoir, dated 1756, of the services of Mr. Noel's Victor ; he hunted most of the Harborough country and all the woods between Stamford and Peterborough, now in the Milton country, having a place at Walcot Park, where the hounds went for a month alternately with Cottesmore. There was in those days a huntsman named Abbey, whose traditional fame has descended to veterans still living. The successor of Mr. Noel was Sir William Lowther, when the pack was kennelled at Stocken Hall, and the celebrated Philip Payne was his huntsman. Sir William, it appears, commenced in 1788, as Payne was in his service twelve years prior to a two seasons' engagement in Cheshire, and it is well known that veteran huntsman entered the service of the Duke of Beaufort in the second year of the present century. The customs of these kennels were then

vastly different from those of modern days. Very stringent economy prevailed throughout the establishment, and the huntsman and whippers-in, in addition to the field and kennel duties, had to dress their own horses on their return from the fatigues of hunting; and this was commonly accomplished by riding them into the pool, and perchance, as it is said, occasionally indulging them with a swim. Sir William Lowther resigning, Sir Gilbert Heathcote supplied his place; and there are many who can remember the worthy baronet at Epsom on a Derby Day, invariably attired in white cords, with flowing ribbons at the knees, top boots, and blue coat, after the fashion of a real old English country gentleman, which, in good truth, he was. Young James Abbey performed the duties of huntsman; and the hard riding Dick Christian, whose merits have been so marvellously magnified, was the whipper-in. Of pluck he had plenty, but his hand was heavy, and his conceptions most incorrect. In 1802, on Sir William Lowther coming to the estates and the title, as the second Viscount Lonsdale, he resumed the mastership of the hounds, and established them at Cottesmore; five years after he was created an Earl. Old

Lambert, who had whipped in to the Duke of Leeds' Hounds, was installed as huntsman till his death, when Slack succeeded him, who, in his turn, gave way to Lambert's son, who continued in office till the hounds were sold and the establishment broken up. William Smith, of Brocklesby, was the head whip from 1837 till the hounds were sold. Preserving a taste for ancient customs, his lordship favoured large, heavy hounds, too big and unwieldy to suit more modern instincts; and when sold at the kennels by Messrs. Tattersall, in 1842, the result did not answer expectations, though the more refined bitches were sought for. The horses were sent to London, but many of them did not change masters.

At this time Sir Richard Sutton introduced a splendid pack of hounds, with which he had been hunting the Burton country. The numerous celebrities from the Belvoir, the Brocklesby, Sir Tatton Sykes's and Mr. Foljambe's kennels, which Sir Richard had selected to infuse fresh strains of blood, had rendered the pack very perfect, and hunting them in person, with Ben Morgan for his kennel huntsman and head whipper-in, a new

era was opened, and the foxes had to fly for their lives—if, indeed, that flight availed them. But the Quorn country becoming vacant in 1847, presented attractions irresistible to Sir Richard; and then came Mr. Henley Greaves, with a pack of hounds, more than half of which were drafts, and, following such a liberal and experienced master as the baronet, there might have been a contrast. Five years afterwards, Mr. Borrowes, with another scratch pack, collected from all quarters, maintained the mastership three seasons, and from that period, 1855, Sir John Trollope, very greatly to the satisfaction of the country, has held the reins of government. At that time Mr. Drake, relinquishing the Bicester country, sold his hounds to Sir John, who re-sold them in 1857. The present pack originated from the Berkeley kennels, which supplied the greatest proportion, a reduction of their forces having that year taken place, in consequence of the resignation of the Cheltenham country; the Brocklesby, the Belvoir, Sir Richard Sutton's, Lord H. Bentinck's, and Mr. Foljambe's, supplied the remainder, and it has since been bred almost exclusively

from the Belvoir kennels. At the commencement of the season there were forty-two and a half couples of hounds in the Cottesmore kennels, whereof twelve couples were juveniles, six and a half couples in their second season, nine couples in their third season, seven couples in their fourth season, six couples in their fifth season, one hound that has seen six winters' work, and one couple and a half that have done duty a year longer. Of these, from accidents and other misfortunes, two couples and a half are to be returned missing, and among that number Trouncer, a very valuable hound, in his second season, that was unfortunately ridden over. Five couples of the dog-hounds have found favour as sires, a moiety of which have afforded proofs of their perfection in the field for five winters. Governor, a nice airy hound, is a son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Challenger and his Gossamer, combining also the blood of Mr. Foljambe's and the Belvoir kennels, as Challenger was descended from Mr. Foljambe's Chaunter and the Burton Charity. Gossamer, from the Belvoir Guider and the Burton Cowslip, an undeniably good strain. Leveller, a hare-pied hound, having

been amiss, did not show to advantage ; he is a son of Mr. Drake's Lucifer and Lord Henry Bentinck's Remnant, a daughter of his lordship's Craftsman, whose good qualities have been so extensively dispersed throughout most of the fashionable establishments of modern times. Plunder, a hound of good size and much power, came from the Burton kennels, and may be justly distinguished as being the sire of the gems of the pack ; he is a son of Sir Richard Sutton's Rambler and Lord Henry Bentinck's Pliant, and he is a worthy representative of the kennel from whence he came before he was introduced to the magic mysteries of woodcraft. Royal, a good black, white, and tan hound, though perhaps a trifle short in his neck, also owes his birth-right to the Burton worthies, and is the issue of the Belvoir Lexicon and Roguish, a daughter of Ranter and Rapture. Comrade, a strong, useful, black and white hound, inherits the blood of the Belvoir Comus and Harlot. The Belvoir Comus was a son of Champion and Barmaid. Wrangler, a very neat black and white hound, whose services are enlisted in the small pack, is of some-

what similar lineage, in his maternal escutcheon, through Welfare, a descendant of the Belvoir Comus and Lord Henry Bentinck's Wrangle. To Statesman may, I think, be accorded the credit of being the cleverest on the flags, and a wide cast must be made to find one better bred. The Belvoir Gambler is his sire, Syren his dam. Gambler was a son of Rifler and Gaylass, and to Syren all honour is due as daughter of Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest. The notice of stallion hounds concludes with Romer, a nice active, airy young hound, in his second season, very clever about his head and neck. His paternal ancestor, the Duke of Rutland's Singer, was a son of Comus and Syren; and his dam, Ringlet, was bred by Sir Richard Sutton from Trueman and Roguish.

The matrons are of an especially high order, and would be ornaments to many packs of much longer standing. In my travels I can see plenty of dog-hounds of good size, with abundance of bone; but it is difficult to meet with those of the other sex having corresponding power; many of them, however, were in the apartment necessarily devoted to their accommodation, and

some of them evidently in a condition to add to a future generation, in which state were Rocket, Pastime, a handsome black, white, and tan descendant of the Belvoir Chaser and Lord Henry Bentinck's Pliant; Cruel also evinced proofs of increase, as did Rachel, a daughter of the celebrated Belvoir Rallywood. To go through a minute description of the pack would be wearisome, but I must introduce Mariner, a very good stamp of hound, with much power; Frantic and Frenzy, both very clever; Stormer, Sanguine, Skilful, and Susan, of the same litter as Statesman; Bridegroom, a very rich coloured hound, and Danger, both sons of Royal. I must, however, in conclusion, dwell upon three particularly clever brothers of this year's entry. Galloper, Gamester, and Genius, descended from Plunder and Gravity. Three more clever young hounds of one family it would be difficult to find. Taking the kennel through they are very level, not exceeding twenty-three inches in height, are of good colour, with plenty of bone and abundance of symmetry. The kennels which they occupy are at Little Bytham, close to the railway station, and were erected, if I am not mistaken, by Lord

Willoughby d'Eresby. They are about seven miles from Stamford, which is the most convenient locality for a temporary visitor, and I can commend my friends to Mr. Whineup, who, holding the George Hotel under the Marquis of Exeter, provides all the delicacies of the season in unlimited profusion. He also occupies a large farm on his lordship's estate, where he breeds many horses of high character.

The almost unprecedented absence of frost throughout the winter has afforded no days of respite for wearied horses or hounds, and gentlemen with short studs are pretty nearly used up. In many hunting establishments, too, this is becoming a somewhat serious affair. During the boisterous weather which so long prevailed, the important phenomenon, scent, was more than ever unaccountably precarious. On some occasions, when terrible gales were raging, hounds could run, more particularly along sheltered valleys, and on the lee side of hedge rows. The vast quantity of rain that fell rendered the land in a state capable of holding a scent; thus the condition of the atmosphere was propitious, as very little variation of temperature existed beyond

that which the wind on elevated and exposed situations occasioned. On the wind subsiding, scent became wonderfully good. Such mild weather has scarcely ever been known in the month of February.

On the day I paid my respects to these hounds at Manthorp, the morning was very far from inviting, but the storms abated, and the wind became somewhat less troublesome. When the hounds were drawing Careby Wood it was intimated that a fox was in the habit of frequenting a hedge row near at hand, and, with excellent discrimination, Sir John Trollope sent a messenger to present his card rather than take the hounds to the spot and incur the wildness and confusion inseparable with such a course of proceeding. The mission was successful, and the fox having notice to arouse from his resting-place, skirted the covert which had just been drawn, and the hounds settling well to their work carried the line with perfect steadiness and truth to Witham Wood, and on to that beautiful domain, Grimsthorpe Park, where there is a greater proportion of grass than in general prevails, for the industrious handicraft of agriculture has, within a

few years, materially increased the operations of the plough in most parts of the Cottesmore country. With but a catching scent most exquisitely the pack drove their fox from Grimsthorpe, when some ploughed land intercepting their course they had to work it inch by inch over fallows, and here I think it was Comrade who guided them. They were then pointing for Irnham, and in the old Park wood they no doubt got on to the line of a fresh fox, who, steering his course over the park, was saved from further exertion, by three ambitious young farmers riding the hounds off the scent in a most incautious manner, and nothing more could be done. In the expectation that the first fox had retraced his steps the hounds were held back to Grimsthorpe, and although there appeared in places some indications of a scent, the elements were antagonistic, and a very good hunting run, without blood, elicited the working powers of the pack to admiration. I was particularly struck with the character of the horses in this and the surrounding countries, not merely of the hunters, but more especially of the hacks; so many with superlatively good action I have seldom seen.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HONOURABLE GEORGE FITZWILLIAM'S
HOUNDS AND COUNTRY.

A century's uninterrupted possession, descending from father to son, may be accepted as an indisputable title to all the rights and privileges appertaining to a hunting country, and how very few masters of foxhounds are there who can rejoice in as proud and enviable a distinction! Such, however, is the case in this instance. Frequent changes of management are most prejudicial to perfection in a pack of foxhounds, but throughout this extensive period there have only been three masters and four huntsmen. At a period so very remote it is extremely difficult to obtain positive information respecting precise dates, but it is known that the first pack of foxhounds introduced into the Milton Kennels was during the lifetime of that Earl Fitzwilliam who, on the authority of the *Peerage*, was

born in 1748. This nobleman is renowned for having taken great delight in all the details appertaining to the chase, and was highly accomplished in the management of hounds. William Deane was the first huntsman, and came with the pack, which was previously established in Oxfordshire by the Lord Foley of that day, to whom I referred in my notice of the Heythrop country. Deane was a man of high repute, and doubtless the hounds were bred with consummate care and judgment, so far as the appliances and customs of the age permitted. His assistants were William Newman, and Lambert, whose son, inheriting his father's aptitude, was for many years huntsman to Lord Lonsdale's hounds, in the Cottesmore country. John Clark, who held various appointments in the Earl Fitzwilliam's establishment some six-and-thirty years, and who was for some time whipper-in, eventually succeeded Deane as huntsman. During Deane's administration it appears they very seldom resorted to other kennels for any fresh infusion of blood, except perhaps to Mr. Foljambe's, but as lists of hounds were not in those days published, report is my only authority. When Clark was appointed to the office,

however, recourse was had to the Brocklesby and Cottesmore strains. In the year 1821 Tom Sebright was engaged, and he, it appears, went more extensively afield, procuring the services of celebrities from the Oakley, the Badminton, the Belvoir, the Brocklesby, his previous master Mr. Osbaldeston's, Sir Richard Sutton's, and the present Mr. Foljambe's kennels. Isaac Guest, a veteran still living, and liberally portioned off by the noble family he served full thirty years, was first whip to Sebright, till 1841, when Wm. Barwick took his place. George Carter came afterwards, and having had one year's probation as under whip, he was promoted to the second post of honour about sixteen years since. Now a word to the memory of the veteran Tom Sebright, regarded as the father of huntsmen, and a very great authority on all matters relating to the pursuit of the fox, and the cabalistic science of breeding hounds, a mystery, be it said, that he was very chary of imparting. In his time no lists of these hounds were ever published, and an insight to his private manuscript was doubtless a grant of high significance. It is said that Tom Sebright's father first studied the mystic art

in that true land of sporting, Shropshire, under Mr. Corbet, at the time the eccentric and enthusiastic Tom Moody was in that gentleman's service as whipper-in. About the year 1790 he was hunting the hounds kept by Mr. Dutton, at Slaughter, near Stow in the Wold, at which place Tom Sebright was born. Old Sebright was eventually huntsman to the New Forest hounds. Imparting his instincts to his son, he procured his entry with the Surrey, and from thence he was engaged by Sir Mark Sykes; but Mr. Osbaldeston discovered his usefulness, and, after serving two apprenticeships under the "Squire's" tuition, was admirably qualified to undertake the duties of huntsman to Earl Fitzwilliam's hounds. Sebright would have proved himself a bad pupil indeed, had he not adopted the practices which Mr. Osbaldeston exemplified with such brilliant success, alike in breeding and hunting the hounds, in both of which, as it is said, he followed the good examples he had so thoroughly studied. His manner in the field was particularly courteous and pleasing. It is a very onerous duty, when it devolves on a huntsman, to caution ambitious spirits from overriding hounds, and it is very

frequently the cause of their being censured, but that was not the case with Sebright, whose mild and respectful “Hold hard, gentlemen, pray hold hard!” had more effect than all the strong expressions and exhibitions of temper for which some huntsmen are occasionally conspicuous. With every desire to make the most charitable allowances for the extreme provocation to which huntsmen are subject on such very trying occasions, I feel that, without any personality, this is a good opportunity of introducing the subject, and, whenever an uncivil or discourteous expression is about to escape from their lips that they will check it, with the remembrance that it is not the language of the renowned veteran Tom Sebright. It would seem that the preliminary education of a huntsman, to be successful, should commence at an extremely early age: there is very ancient authority for this, and we have modern examples. In a most quaint and curious production from the pen of Edmund of Langley, one of the sons of the third Edward, written about the close of the fourteenth century, and one of the earliest authorities on hunting, directions how a huntsman should be trained are given:—“First, he

must be a child of eight years of age, or a little older," and the royal author assigns as a reason for enlisting a youth of such tender years "that it is a craft that requireth all a man's life ere he be perfect thereof; and also men saith that what a man learneth in his youth he will hold in his age." The remarks which follow as to the duties of the kennel are singularly coincident with the customs of modern times. Among other things, it is recommended that "the hounds' beds should be made of timber at least a foot from the ground, well provided with straw 'right thick,' because that the moisture from the earth shall not make them morfounde." Is not this suggestive that kennel lameness was known even in those primitive days when the term hunting was meant to include the chase of "the hare, the herte, the bukke, the roo, the wild boore, the wolf, the ffox, the gray, the cat, the martin, and the otir." The application as regards early tuition, I must observe, refers to our veteran Jem Hills, who, it will be remembered, commenced at the early age of ten as whipper-in to the Duke of Dorset's Harriers; and George Carter began at a similar age with Mr. Selby Lowndes, at first with harriers and

one year with foxhounds ; he then came to whip-in to Sebright in company with William Turpin. The immediate cause of the illness which closed poor Sebright's earthly career is represented as proceeding from cold, taken at one of the hound shows, and his death took place on 1st of September, 1861, when George Carter's promotion followed.

The Honourable George Fitzwilliam succeeded to the very extensive estates in this country on the decease of the late Earl Fitzwilliam, in 1856, and by similar inheritance became entitled to the pack, together with an enthusiastic love for foxhunting, which descended as an heirloom with all the other family virtues. A great portion of the country is on Mr. Fitzwilliam's estate, and foxes are well-preserved on the Duke of Buccleuch's property, the Marquis of Exeter's, and Lord Westmoreland's. Lord Chesham is a very zealous friend, and his lordship's coverts, Monkswood, Aversley, and Archer's Wood, invariably afford plenty of foxes. Then Sir John Trollope renders important service ; Mr. Heathcote always has a good show, and also Mr. Shaftoe, and, again, Lord Lilford on the borders of the Pytchley

country. I was surprised, however, to hear of an act which was perpetrated by a keeper in the early part of the season. The hounds were running a fox in the direction of a covert under his care, when he planted a file of men to head him, and having a gun in his hand, fired it, to turn the fox from his point. It does not appear that the fox was hit, and it is to be hoped the man did not shoot at him with that malice prepense, nevertheless it was a most abominable and unjustifiable act. Trusting such an occurrence may not be repeated, I refrain from a more minute identity.

A considerable portion of this country lies at a distance from the kennels, and, consequently, entails more than an average amount of wear and tear of horses, hounds, and men, and railway communication is not extensively available. Then, again, a van would be almost a useless conveyance, as the nature of the roads will not admit of wheels without making very wide circuits. The limits extend to the countries hunted by the Cambridgeshire, the Oakley, and the Pytchley, with the Cottesmore close at hand; and on the east bounded by the Fens, where

horses cannot follow. Thus the hounds have often fifteen miles to travel before the duties of the day begin. About home there is a considerable portion of woodland, and it is a capital country for making hounds, as well as putting their highest instincts and qualities to the test. There is a vast quantity of ploughed land, infinitely more than in olden times. This applies generally. From Peterborough to Stamford, with Wansford midway, the country is very open, but there is very little grass. The railway stations convenient to visitors are Huntingdon for Abbots Ripton, Aversley Wood, Buckworth, Holme Wood, Leighton Village, Monks' Wood, Weston Mill, and Sawtry Gorse; Oundle station for Barnwill Castle and Barnwill Wolds, Ashton Wolds, Lilford cross-roads, Oundle Wood, and Papley Gorse; Thrapston station for Bythorne Tollbar, Catworth guide post, Molesworth Village, Stanwick Pasture, and Titchmarsh; Wansford station for Nassington Lodge, Sutton Wood, Thornhaugh, Walcot Park, Water Newton, Elton Furze, and Elton Tollbar; Peterborough station for Castor Hanglands and Long Orton.

The splendid structure, Burghley House,

was erected by the celebrated lord whose name it bears, renowned in history as the treasurer of England in the eventful reign of Queen Elizabeth. The exquisite beauty which so delights the eye, indicates elegance and chasteness of design which may be aptly associated with the refined approval of the reigning Queen under whose auspices it was constructed. Ornamented with turrets, cupolas, and pinnacles, tastfully arranged, they present uniformity of structure, without conveying the unsightly character of monotonous repetition, and the significantly grand edifice suggests the idea of a temple sacred to noble deeds. Approaching from Stamford, through the avenue of majestic oaks, whose lofty branches arching over, form, as it were, a canopy of imposing grandeur, winding round through forest trees of ancient growth and gigantic dimensions, a view of the mansion presents itself, reposing in all the solemnity of princely elegance. To complete the scene, when the hounds and the gay assemblage are in attendance, nothing can be wanting to associate it with the most enchanting picture "Merrie England" can portray. The park, too, is replete with scenic beauties,

as the coverts are with the foxes, and on a fine day nothing can be more attractive to the fair equestrians who grace the hunting-field with their presence, than an appointment at Burghley House.

There is a circumstance connected with this country which I consider particularly worthy of remark, concerning which I have on many previous occasions ventured to express a most favourable opinion: there is scarcely a fox-earth in it—all the foxes are stub-bred. There is no doubt it renders them much stouter and wilder, at the same time they are less prone to go to ground in drains or places of that nature; their habits do not teach them to do so, and I feel convinced, if all the earths in those hunts where they prevail were broken up, that it would tend vastly to improve the character of the foxes, and be a means of increasing sport. The kennels have evidently been constructed at various periods, which the different styles of architecture denote. In one part is to be seen the castellated order, or tower, supported by colossal buttresses, capable of bidding defiance to gales of even more terrific force than those which prevailed about the

time of my visit; then there are additional structures of divers periods, and more recent dates. They are spacious, remarkably convenient, and apparently possess every essential requisite to promote health.

Forty-five couples of old hounds and seventeen couples of this year's entry comprise the present pack. Nine couples and a half have contributed their aid two seasons, fourteen couples three seasons, ten and a half couples four seasons, five couples five seasons, three couples six seasons, two and a half couples seven seasons, and Foreman and Rasselias represent the ancients of their eighth and ninth seasons. Besides these two veterans there are eight couples honoured with the proud distinction of paternity. Finisher, in his seventh season, a clever hound, son of Feudal and Harlot, imparts a cross from the Badminton kennels, Feudal being a son of their Flyer. One year younger is Herod, a hound of useful stamp, descended from Har-binger and Rarity. Bachelor, in his fifth season, the issue of the Brocklesby Bellman and Rakish, is a hound of good size with plenty of bone. Shiner and Sportsman are sons of Sultan and Trinket; the former, bear-

ing a strong resemblance to Mr. Drake's Lucifer, is a hound of great power, but his brother possesses more elegance. Harbinger (not the sire of Herod), a fine sagacious-looking black and white hound, coines of excellent parentage, his sire Hardwick having no less than ten couples and a half of his produce at work. Orpheus, straight and good-looking, is from Ottoman and Blithsome. Forester, with all the good attributes of a foxhound, on short and capital legs, with plenty of bone, a capital colour, rich black, white, and tan, is a son of Foreman and Spinster. Hero, one of the numerous family of the Hardwicks, is, perhaps a little light of bone, but his rare working properties render him an especial favourite. Hercules, another son of Hardwick and Wanton, on his first appearance gives the idea of being a nice smart-looking hound, but he is one of that stamp the more you look him over the better you like him. Marlpot, son of Marlpot and Bounty, tick marked, has famous loins, and is a very useful class of hound. Marmion, in whom we find Marlpot again as his sire and Ruin as his dam, is a grandson, through Ruin, of Lord

Yarborough's Rockwood, a smart hound, not of great size. The three matrons, in their seventh season, Friendly, Relish, and Regia, must not be dismissed with ordinary praise. The first is a daughter of Feudal, the second of Lord Yarborough's Rockwood, and the third of Ottoman. Melody, Felix, and Red Rose, are their dams. Friendly took the prize at Yarm, and I think Relish is equally deserving of distinction. They are grand and stately in their appearance, of good rich colour, with superlatively beautiful heads, necks, and shoulders, with good loins and thighs, plenty of bone, straight on their legs, and I scarcely know what more I can say in admiration of a foxhound. Mischief, in her fifth season, a daughter of Marplot and Pleasant, is very handsome, and a capital worker, distinguishable by her light tongue, which I heard her use most melodiously. Sprightly, a grey pied bitch, daughter of Sultan and Handmaid, also attracted my notice in her work. Timely, Tulip, and Truelove, do great honour to their sire, Hardwick. The present season's entry includes a very promising litter, Caliban, Cruizer, Coaster, and Caroline, possess-

ing great family character, by Lord Henry Bentinck's Cardinal and Fortune. Coaster distinguishes himself in his work to an unusual degree; Crystal also deserves a word of praise. Charmer, a very neat daughter of the Duke of Beaufort's Comrade, comes from a rare sort, her mother, Spangle, being descended from Sultan, a very great favourite with Sebright. His Grace's Comrade was a son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Comrade, than which there cannot be a better cross. Dowager, from the Belvoir Druid; Flexible, by the Badminton Finder; and Homily, by Sir John Trollope's Royal, are all of great promise; and Symmetry and Sweatmeat, by the last-named sire, speak well for the continued eminence of this highly celebrated kennel. If I were to content myself merely with the introduction of the gems, I should do but inadequate justice to the pack. The vast amount of symmetry they display indicates the value Tom Sebright was wont to bestow on that property. Now it is well known that speed and endurance cannot exist without true proportions; these proportions may not invariably coincide with the line of beauty, but as a general principle they do.

In the hound of gigantic frame it is not to be found. I have reason to believe these hounds, in olden times, were of higher stature, the dogs averaging twenty-five inches, and the bitches only two inches lower. When Sebright came, instigated by the instincts he had happily acquired from Mr. Osbaldeston's exquisite examples, he reduced the standard to that which is the *acmé* of perfection, three-and-twenty inches. The experience of more modern days has convinced most masters of hounds that a medium height is more conducive to perfection, and it is self-evident that hounds of moderate size in an enclosed country, where the nature of the fences is such that they cannot fly them, must carry a better head than those of great bulk. There is, nevertheless, a certain medium to be observed in order to acquire power, and the advantages of stride, where it can be displayed. For fine heads, necks, shoulders, legs, and loins, this pack is quite the model of perfection. It has, I know, been a conclusion with huntsmen that these fine qualities have been produced by somewhat close breeding. Whether or not that may have been the case half a century

ago, I cannot presume to offer an opinion, but it is evidently not so now. The celebrated stud hound, Hermit, whose descendants are widely diffused in many kennels of high repute, affords an instance. He was a son of Mr. Drake's Hector and Goldfinch, a daughter of Lord Yarborough's Ganymede.

An appointment to meet at the kennels affords an excellent opportunity to see these hounds, as there is in the immediate vicinity a sufficient proportion of woodland to bring their working powers into effect. More than that, before they throw off they are paraded in front of the mansion, a ceremony which arouses the most charming associations of the noble family and their fine old residence, where the truly national sport of foxhunting has been for very many years so fondly cherished. The tempestuous weather that has of late been raging has been anything but conducive to sport, but it has put the hunting properties of hounds, and the talent of their huntsman, to a severe test. The operations of the day commenced in Thistle Wood, the first covert Sebright drew when he came as huntsman to this pack. Here a fox was soon found, and right earnestly the

hounds worked his line, speaking cheerily to it, over the ploughed land which he selected as his route, and round Thorpe House, through Thorpe Woods into Milton Park again; and after hunting him most perseveringly upwards of an hour, he was lost in one of the shrubberies. Whether he went to ground, or what became of him I cannot say, but where shrubs prevail scent is invariably bad. They found another near at hand, and stuck to him most assiduously. Still the elements were unpropitious, and they could not taste him. No hounds were ever more deserving of blood—not individually, but collectively; when in difficulties every hound was feeling for the line. The run of the season, as described to me, was about five weeks previously, when they met at Layton Village, on the Huntingdon side; drew the gorse and found; ran the fox about twenty minutes, when a sheep-dog intrusively presented himself, and thus ended number one. Number two was at home in Raunce Old Meadow, and ran to Denford Ash, but, turning back on his foil, was lost. After drawing Clapton Spinnies blank, went on to Barnwell Wold; found instantly, ran

a ring round and away, leaving Clapton Village on the right, Winwick Wold on the left, Marriner's Gorse on the right, Molesworth on the left, Bythone on the right, pointing for Hunt's Closes, but did not go in; bearing to the left, took a line on the right of Great Catworth; straight ahead, leaving Cubbington on the right, pointing for Oakley Woods; turned short to the left from distress to Tillbrook Village, and through the gardens to Wordsditch, leaving that place on the left; and the well-deserving pack ran into their fox at Kimbolton in one hour and twenty-five minutes. Every hound was up at the death; but of the horses not more than eight, as, indeed, the field was scattered in all directions. The hounds left off twenty-five miles from their kennels.

CHAPTER IX.

HEREFORDSHIRE HOUNDS AND COUNTRY.

The sportsman, as he passes from the ever-celebrated and picturesque town of Ross to the ancient city of Hereford, conveyed by the mighty power of steam, cannot fail to be impressed with the idea that it is a country unusually favoured for foxhunting. Traversing the beautiful vale through which the river Wye takes its varied and enchanting course, which the railway crosses, in the short distance of twelve miles, no less than four times, the spacious pasture lands, bounded by extensive woodlands, are indicative of extraordinary capabilities, and, when the foxes can be induced to encounter the meadows, few countries can surpass it; but the vulpine family are highly gifted with instinct, which teaches them how they can best regard their own safety; thus, they do not commonly cross these grassy plains, se-

lecting in preference their sylvan haunts and the arable lands, which are less favourable to the olfactory powers of their pursuers. The woodlands are numerous and extensive; one of which, called Halfwood, comprises several thousand acres. The charms of variety, however, are profusely dispensed; for there is hill and vale, ploughed land and grass, and the foxes are proverbially stout, which, by the eloquent persuasion of a determined pack of hounds, are very generally compelled to take to the open, when, with a fair scent, a run is a certain result. It is a severe country for hounds, one in which their good qualities are most extensively tested. They must commence their day's work with a persevering aptitude to draw for and find their foxes; they must also be gifted with the important taste for music—mute hounds would be worthless; moreover, they require courage and stamina, with the inseparable companion, condition, or they would never be able to run down the hardy denizens of the strong woodlands. To these qualifications hunting powers are of great consequence; because, from the nature of the country, it frequently happens that a huntsman cannot at

all times be with them to render his assistance.

The establishment of foxhounds to hunt this country regularly is comparatively of recent date. During the early part of the present century harriers were kept in divers places, and the foxes were occasionally aroused by their melody, but whether their brushes or masks were often brought home as trophies is a question I cannot determine. Mr. Symonds was perhaps the most successful of any of that period. With the year 1826, however, foxhunting assumed a more important position. In that year the late Mr. Dansey, of Easton, a good sportsman, who distinguished himself in other countries, brought his hounds to Hereford, and continued four seasons, when Mr. Lewis succeeded him, but was not fortunate in his attempts. Two years afterwards Mr. Thomas purchased the hounds from Mr. Lewis, and by the addition of drafts from the Badminton, Berkeley, and other kennels soon formed a very efficient pack. They then became worthy of a distinctive title, and were known as the Herefordshire Hounds. A committee undertook the responsibilities, the hounds and horses being farmed

by Mr. Bosley, who is ever ready to render his good services to his countrymen and his friends. With such favourable auspices to promote the welfare of anything connected with the county, the chase most especially, as those which a highly valued and popular master of hounds has at his command, under Mr. Thomas's management, the difficulties which had previously existed, and which invariably do exist in every country till fox-hunting becomes established, were gradually overcome, and during the last two years of his mastership that gentleman was induced to take the whole of the responsibilities on himself.

Lord Gifford, having resigned the V. W. H. in 1845, undertook the management from Mr. Thomas, and kept the hounds two seasons, about which time the very valuable assistance of Mr. Lanwarne, as honorary secretary, commenced, and which has contributed vastly to the promotion of fox-hunting in Herefordshire. On Lord Gifford removing into Hampshire, this country was taken by Mr. Symonds, when the members of the hunt purchased the hounds from Mr. Thomas, and although that gentleman

has now withdrawn from the fatigues of the field, he frequently goes on wheels, or on foot, to see a fox found, and it is delightful to witness the pleasure he takes in the proceedings of the day. In 1850, Lord Gifford again returned, and showed abundant sport, though part of the time, during the ever-memorable wet season of 1852-53, a great portion of the meadows were flooded, which the foxes seemed to take advantage of. His lordship, finding the V. W. H. vacant in 1854, resigned this country to Mr. Baker ; but that gentleman was so earnestly solicited to take the Albrighton that he consented to do so, introducing Mr. Hellier as his substitute in Herefordshire, who, leaving his hounds solely under the control of his huntsman, only continued one season. Mr. Stubbs followed, and remained a similar period, much to the regret of the sportsmen of the country, who had sufficient opportunities to appreciate his sporting talent. Mr. Marsh filled up the vacuum, but with him affairs assumed a woful condition. Sir Velters Cornewall and Mr. Arkwright, however, came to the rescue, and under their influential guidance the cordial support of every fox-preserved is ensured ;

but not merely that, the kindly feeling which exists between them and the masters of the neighbouring hunts, Captain Stretton and Mr. Thackwell, is certain to be conducive to the interests of each, and the sport these hounds have had since they have taken to the management, betokens the excellent judgment that has presided over their efforts.

The situation of the kennels, which were built by Sir Velters Cornewall and Mr. Arkwright, is judiciously chosen, very central, and without any unnecessary superfluities; they contain all that is requisite for the accommodation of the hounds, with stabling and dwellings adjoining.

A very prominent consideration in the formation of a new pack of hounds is their breeding, and on this essential point great discrimination has been exercised. Sir Walter Carew's pack afforded an excellent basis for a commencement; and on Sir Maurice Berkeley resigning the Cheltenham—now distinguished as the Cotswold country—not requiring so many hounds, an extensive and unusually good draft was consigned from the Berkeley to these kennels. I have for many years expressed my allegiance to that blood, and every

day's experience confirms me in the opinion, that for general purposes of utility, in countries where a combination of those qualities which in some other kennels have been, to a certain degree, overlooked, there are no hounds that surpass them. The list enumerates forty-six couples, including fifteen and a half couples of this year's entry—a very ample complement for three days a week, and affording a surplus from which many may be drafted to make room for those which will be entered next season. Of these, seven couples are descended from Berkeley, four couples and a half from Sir Walter Carew's, the remainder principally from the Belvoir, Burton, Warwickshire, and Lord Portsmouth's kennels. The Herefordshire farmers bred thirteen and a half couples, and I must do them the justice to observe they kept them uncommonly well, each competing with his neighbour who should rear the best hound.

Alderman, Anodyne, and Andover, in their first season, descended from the Cotswold Albion and Rally, are three very useful hounds. Blue Pill, Bridesmaid, and Benefit—the latter a very smart-looking black and white bitch—are the issue of Roderick and

Bridget; the sire is from Lord Leconfield's, and the dam from Sir Walter Carew's. Beadsman, a ticked hound, son of Rutland and Brenda, is worthy of notice. Needful, Nelson, and Nimble, another litter, are by Prophet, out of Sir Walter Carew's and Nancy; the first of these is neat, but her feet and ankles are not of the best quality. Nelson, her brother, is free from that objection, and is altogether a promising hound. Officer, son of Sir Maurice Berkeley's Ottoman and Perfect, has much to recommend him, though somewhat heavy in his shoulders; he is grandson of the Brocklesby Orator and the Berkeley Termagant, a very superior sort. Rutland and Posey were the progenitors of Pansey and Primrose, both of which are worthy of especial distinction. Trimbush, a very neat, hare-pied hound, son of Rutland and Telltale, took my attention, though Sir Velters considers him too light in his thighs, a fault I must admit. These were all bred in the Herefordshire kennels. From the Belvoir, there is a good-looking black and white hound called Lexicon, descended from their Lexicon and their Frantic. Sportsman, Sportley, and Susan are by their Fugleman. Stormer, who

bears the name of his sire, is from the same kennel. I observed him doing quite his share of work in the field. The two-season hunters number seven couples and a half—Affable, Archer, Artist, and Attila, descended from Admiral (bred at the Burton kennels) and Butterfly, afford valuable assistance in telling the line of a fox; the bitch is black and white, with tan about the head, a capital worker; the colour of the other three is not so good, being a kind of lemon pie. Cleveland, a dark, hare-pied hound, is also of the Burton blood. Denmark and Druid, their sire Gimerack from Sir Walter Carew's, are good, useful hounds. Charon, a three season hunter, combines the blood of Mr. Foljambe's Ranger and Mr. Farquharson's Comely, and on some future day will, in all probability, have representatives to do honour to his name. Purity, descended from a similar strain, would scarcely fail to attract notice in the field. Harborough and Hector are from the Berkeley kennels, sons of Landlord and Harmony: they do credit to their parentage—stout, honest, and true to the line. They were entered by Earl Fitzhardinge, and are in their fourth season. There is a sister to them

called Hecuba, now at Berkeley, and the blood was held in great favour by his lordship. Lawyer, from the same kennels, is by Lord Henry Bentinck's Craftsman and Lufra; he has also a sister in his native kennels. Of the fifth season's entry there is only one couple and a half, but of the previous year there are five couples; whereof there is Gallant, a black and white ticked hound, rather a characteristic distinction in Sir Walter Carew's kennels, from whence he came; Gamester and Gameboy; the former of these has a wonderful character. Plunder, a good, useful, though somewhat rough-looking, hound, is from the Puckeridge. Rutland, a year older, a fine black and white tan hound, son of Lord Fitzwilliam's Hero and Sir Maurice Berkeley's Rosamond, is the sire of three couples of this season's entry.

It is now very generally acknowledged that hounds of medium stature are to be preferred to over-sized ones, most especially in a hilly and woodland country; none of these exceed three-and-twenty inches, and, with proportionate power, their activity and endurance enables them to perform their work in a most satisfactory manner. I saw sufficient of them

in the field to convince me of this, irrespective of the good character I heard of them. Their performance, on the day I met them at Hall Court, when they ran into their first fox in one hour and twenty minutes, and their second fox, which they found at Cowarne, in one hour and ten minutes, was quite sufficient to convince me of their capabilities. I never saw hounds settle down to the scent more quickly, if so quickly, as they did with the last; and I am sure it must have been highly gratifying to that excellent sportsman, Mr. Thomas, who has given up horse exercise, but who was present on foot, to see so beautiful a find, and such a gallant fox break away from his favourite old covert, and the hounds doing their work in such exquisite style. George Hills, a nephew and pupil of the ever-renowned Jem of Heythrop fame, hunted these hounds till the spring of 1863, when he made an engagement with Major Murray as huntsman to the Ludlow. Thomas Carr, who had officiated as whipper-in, was then promoted.

CHAPTER X.

THE HEYTHROP HOUNDS AND COUNTRY.

The great diversity of country which signalises this far-famed district, highly interesting as it is to those who follow hounds o'er hill and dale, is anything but conducive to scent, therefore, to ensure runs, it is imperatively necessary in breeding hounds that the essential faculty of nose be studied with the utmost care.

On the north-western boundary, about Moreton-in-the-Marsh and Stow-on-the-Wold, stone walls, hedges, and ditches, with occasionally the Evenload and Kingham brooks to negotiate, call forth the instincts of accomplished hunters; and a similar description of country is continued southward along the borders of the Cotswold Hunt to Farmington Grove and New Barn, although in that neighbourhood the walls predominate,

as they do, also, on the borders of the V. W. H. This portion includes the well-known Bradwell Grove, an appointment much patronised by Oxonians, who significantly regard it as imperative to their present and future happiness to apportion their studies between Professor Hills and the more dignified authorities of the University. The vicinity of Bradwell Grove is the *beau ideal* of a stone-wall country. Central, on the southern extremity, is Wychwood Forest, a vast portion of which has latterly been broken up, and here a similar variety of fences present themselves; while near to Blenheim, verging on the Bicester Hunt, there is much strong soil of holding nature. Approaching Deddington there is a fine tract of country, from whence, striking a line westward to Moreton-in-the-Marsh, the confines of the Warwickshire Hunt are represented. The nature of the fences may be accepted as descriptive of the quality of the soil. Where the walls prevail the land is arable; hedges and ditches denote pasture fields, which in wet weather are deep and holding. It may well be designated a nice compact country, the greatest extent from

east to west not exceeding twenty-four miles, and its breadth seventeen. But then it is well stocked with foxes. The Bourton woods are always well tenanted, and the name of Lord Leigh, as the owner of the coverts at Addlestrop, is a sufficient indication that if there were not an abundance of foxes the keepers would no longer hold their appointments. A few years since the well-merited compliment, the presentation of a cup, was conferred on Mr. Pratt for his indefatigable guardianship at Bruern and Tangleay. Mr. Waller at Farmington, and Lords Dynevor and Sherborne, whose estates are in proximity, are alike devoted to the welfare of the hunt; while at Heythrop, since the Earl Shrewsbury has kept the coverts in his own possession, the foxes are carefully protected. Lord Macclesfield's mandates are imperative at Ensham, and equally so are Lord Dillon's at Ditchley. Foxes abound at Blenheim, and the Duke of Marlborough contributes to the funds. Barton was always well stored during the lifetime of Mr. Hall, and his son and successor pays the affectionate tribute to his respected father's memory by following in his footsteps. So likewise the coverts at

Tackley are as well cared for by Mrs. Evetts as they were during her late husband's time. Tarwood, on Mr. Harcourt's estate, is invariably well tenanted, under the supervision of his steward, Mr. John Lord, a staunch friend, whose hospitalities are extended to men, horses, and hounds, whenever they visit that extremity of the country.

It was with great regret I heard in a distant quarter of a keeper having been discharged for want of due respect to the foxes, and that his master, with charitable forbearance and kindness, on taking the man again into his services, found himself deceived, and compelled finally to carry into effect his first intention. The publication of this inefficient keeper's name would be a salutary caution to him and others of his craft, and would be the best means of checking the reprehensible system of fox destruction.

The antecedents of this country are ancient and of a truly aristocratic order. During the latter portion of the eighteenth century the Lord Foley of that day introduced a very superior pack of hounds into the county of Oxford; but it must be observed this was a predecessor of the noble lord who hunted the Quorn and Worcestershire countries.

The present limits of the Heythrop hunt were not, however, then defined, neither was it recognised by that descriptive term. Long before the present century the Badminton country not affording sufficient scope for the sporting spirit inherent in the ducal family of Beaufort, and keenly exemplified in the fifth Duke, his Grace undertook to hunt this country two alternate months. Where he resided I know not. The sixth Duke lived for many years at Cornbury Park, and the hounds were also kept there. When the late Lord Churchill inherited that place and came to reside there, his Grace took Heythrop House, and kennels, with a view to temporary convenience, were erected in the park. In the year 1802 Philip Payne was engaged as huntsman at Badminton, having previously occupied a similar position in Cheshire, and with the Cottesmore Hounds. An anecdote is related of him on his arrival at Badminton, illustrative of his introducing a new system of kennel management. After having fed the hounds, and about to walk them out into the park, the whippers-in proceeded, as had been their custom, to couple up the hounds. "Oh, take those couples away," he exclaimed, "we

don't want them." To which a whipper-in rejoined, "We always couple them, sir, that they may not break away after the deer." Philip's order, however, was imperative, and the hounds evinced no disposition to riot, much to the astonishment of the whippers-in. For a quarter of a century this veteran of the chase accompanied the hounds on their visits to Heythrop, improving the pack and showing capital sport. Great and glorious were the doings in those days. Chapel House, a highly famed caravansary, handy to the kennels, affording the very best of fare, was patronised by those members of the Hunt who were compelled either to leave their Badminton homes or forego the pleasures of foxhunting during the absence of the hounds. The expenses and inconveniences our forefathers necessarily encountered are happily averted by divisions of countries and other changes in our social habits. Age and infirmities working on Philip, in 1826 he resigned his horn in favour of William Long, under whose care the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds continued to hunt this country till the spring of 1835, when, in consequence of ill health, his Grace

signified his intention to confine his hunting to the neighbourhood of Badminton. A few years previous to the Duke's resignation a portion of the mansion of Heythrop was destroyed by fire ; thus being deprived of a residence, the Duke made the Ranger's Lodge, in Wychwood Forest, his temporary abode during a part of the season after the occurrence of the disaster, the hounds continuing to occupy the Heythrop kennels. In the November of the year when the noble Duke withdrew the hounds, which for so many years had afforded such magnificent sport, his Grace was called "to that bourne from which no traveller returns," but not without making a lasting impression on the hearts of all who had the good fortune to participate in his innumerable acts of courtesy and kindness.

It was supposed in those days that the two countries could not individually contain foxes sufficient for two packs of hounds, and much difficulty existed ; but a committee was eventually formed, and the requisite funds raised, the management being vested in Mr. Langston, aided by the powerful influence of Lord Redesdale. A huntsman had to be engaged

and a pack of hounds procured, more of which as I proceed. A triennial mastership terminated Mr. Langston's prominent and popular efforts, to whom succeeded Lord Macclesfield, then Mr. Parker. In 1840, Lord Clonbrock was at the head of affairs for a period similar to that of Mr. Langston. During the succeeding twelve years Lord Redesdale took the entire control, conducting everything with that excellent judgment, taste and discrimination which is ever essential to happy results, and most felicitously were they fulfilled. The duties of the Upper House prevailing over all other considerations in the estimation of his lordship, after the annual business had commenced, his occasional absence in the hunting field was a source of much regret, for no master of hounds was ever more popular, or any whose opinions on hunting matters were more valued and respected. On Lord Redesdale's withdrawal from the active duties of M. F. H., in 1855, Mr. Hall was induced to occupy that ostensible position. A better sportsman, a better manager, a better master, or a better judge of hounds and hunting could not have been selected. I might be accused of flattery, but, alas ! he has gone to those realms where

no flattery can reach him. It is only a just tribute to his memory to say, and to which I am certain every sportsman and every individual in the Heythrop country will respond, that he possessed every good quality a country gentleman could possess. In the spring of the past year ill health compelled Mr. Hall to relinquish his trust, when Colonel Thomas, who had astonished the Turks with a pack of foxhounds during the Crimean war, was appointed as his successor. At the conclusion of one brief season this arrangement terminated, and, greatly to the delight of all who are interested, Lord Redesdale has again undertaken the responsibilities he so ably conducted before.

I must now try back to Jem Hills and the hounds, and although the latter are accustomed to take precedence in the field, I think the huntsman may be entitled to that compliment on paper. His career has been an eventful and fortuitous one, affording a pleasing example of what may be effected by integrity of purpose and steady conduct. At the early age of ten he was turned adrift upon the world to seek his fortune, with nothing more to ensure his advancement than

a suit of clothes and a shilling in his pocket. He soon got into the service of the Duke of Dorset, and was initiated in the mysteries of whipping-in to a pack of harriers in Kent; where he also attended his Grace as pad groom. But in consequence of an unfortunate and fatal accident which befel the Duke in Ireland, the establishment was broken up. Hills then got an engagement to ride second horse and assist in whipping-in for Mr. Maberly, among the hills and flints of Surrey, where his elder brother, Tom, was huntsman. When little more than eighteen he gained a step as kennel huntsman and head whip to Colonel Wyndham, remaining there till the breaking up of the establishment in 1826, whereupon he came to London, and the Duke of Beaufort offering him a vacant second whip's appointment, although it might be considered a retrograde movement, he had the good sense to undertake it; William Long at that time being huntsman, and William Todd first whip. At Badminton, Hills continued five seasons, when he engaged himself to the late Earl Ducie, then the Hon. H. Moreton, who had just commenced hunting the Vale of White Horse. Here he had a fine opportunity of

improving practically on the observations he had made, as a new pack was formed from drafts. At the termination of the succeeding five years, the Heythrop country being established, he was engaged as huntsman, where he has remained ever since, esteemed and regarded by all classes with whom he is concerned. Some years ago, from over exertion, he had the misfortune to rupture a blood-vessel, and for two seasons his nephew, George Hills, took the horn; but fortunately rest restored him, and, as all good ones do, "he came again" as cheery as ever.

The foundation of the pack was laid with twenty-five couples from the Duke of Beaufort's, twenty-one couples from Lord Radnor's, which did not turn out satisfactorily, ten or twelve couples from Lord Ducie's, including Rocket, whose descendants do him great credit, a couple and a half, unentered, of bitches from Mr. Drake's, and an unentered draft from the Warwickshire. The following season four couples and a half were added from Mr. Drake's, two couples of which were bitches. These hounds proved very valuable. It is probable they were a second draft, nearly equivalent to being picked. These, it

must be understood, with the exception of those from Mr. Drake, were selections, not drafts, from which it is a fallacy to suppose that any man can form an efficient pack for very many years. On the subjects of drafts I will quote an extract from a letter of a very eminent master of hounds, who writes:— “ Except some old family packs, very few can call themselves self-constituted, and all who have anything to do with the breeding of hounds, know that on such packs only can reliance be placed for keeping up the fox-hound in his full excellence, not merely of form and substance, but of the more material points of nose and staunchness.” I will, however, venture to introduce a remark on this subject, for even in the old-established packs there are certain strains of blood which run in families so much more valuable for the powers of transmitting good qualities to their progeny, that it is only by the exercise of great judgment and experience, that the satisfactory results will follow.

Of late years the Heythrop have never made up their entry from other packs, and to Hills is due all the credit of making them what they now are. He has not roamed pro-

miscuously for sires, confining himself principally to the Belvoir, the Badminton, the Brocklesby, Lord Fitzwilliam's, and the Berkeley kennels, not, however, overlooking the Warwickshire Tarquin, that he was the first to patronise. Observing that hound when, I think, only in his second season, carrying a very low scent, he expressed a wish to secure his services, when it was objected that he was too plain to breed from, and somewhat inclined to be leggy ; but Jem was not to be beaten from his point ; he wanted nose, and the personal inelegancies he argued he could correct by careful selections of partners. He had the hound, and most valuable are his descendants. The Brocklesby Plunder rendered vast service, and the Berkeley Nathan has faithfully conveyed the good quality of his ancestors. This hound I had occasion to mention in my visit to the Worcestershire kennels, alluding at the same time to his brother, Neighbour, a great favourite in Lord Gifford's pack, remarkable for the fine coats he transmitted to his progeny, a characteristic which I find appertains also to Nathan.

The principal stud hounds bred at these

kennels, whose progeny are inheriting the good qualities of their race, are Mercury, a son of Manager and Whirlwind ; the sire conveys the Oakley blood through their Factor. Ajax introduces a good strain from Mr. Foljambe's Victor, with Affable. There is now a valuable infusion from the Belvoir kennels to be seen in two brothers, Harlequin and Hamlet, by their Pilot, and Heroine, a daughter of the Berkeley Hector and Pamela. Hills considers Harlequin to be the fastest hound he ever saw, and his looks confirm the opinion. A finer shaped hound can scarcely be imagined. With length and true proportions, there are in him combinations of quality indicating high breeding and all the true characteristics of the Belvoir family. He is remarkably fine about and below his hocks, I might say rather light, but his thighs are good. His head, neck, shoulders, body, and loins are superlative ; his colour, a rich black and tan, with a little white, and a few tick marks, is the true representative of the blood from which he comes. Granby is a son of the Belvoir Grappler and Gipsy, Proctor, by the Belvoir Pilot and Gaiety, a daughter of the Belvoir Grappler and Gipsy, are full of Belvoir lineage. Granby

and Gaiety, although brother and sister, are not of the same litter. Ferryman is by Nathan and Fanciful, and has very clever representatives in Waspish, Welcome, and Whirlwind, descended from Wakeful, in their third season. Middleton, who traces back to Rocket, one of the first inmates of these kennels from Earl Dusie's pack, is a son of Pilgrim and Mindful; Pilgrim, by the Badminton Fleecer, or, more correctly, Mr. Morrell's Fleecer, as he was bred by that gentleman from the Berkeley Furrier and his own Heroine, and included in a lot which the Duke of Beaufort purchased at the Tubney sale. Middleton is the sire of several very useful hounds in their second and third seasons. Ranger, a four season hunter, possesses the fine symmetry of his sire, Harlequin. Murmurer, a year his senior, a son of Mercury and Heedless, on short, good legs, will proclaim his pretensions as a progenitor in the entry of next season. Modish, a wonderfully handsome hare-pied matron, descended from Mercury. Affable, having had for her lover the Brocklesby Fairplay, is well represented by Famous, Flourish, Foreman, and Forester. Factor, a young hound, entered this season, takes my fancy immensely,

and if he proves as good in his work as he is on the flags, I must give him the precedence over any other of his year. He is a son of the Duke of Beaufort's Foiler and Needful, a granddaughter of Nathan. Foiler is descended from Falstaff, a sire of much repute at Badminton. Precious, a daughter of the North Staffordshire Pilot, with great depth, and a fine, imposing frame, looks like producing a family of high pretensions. Rachel, Racket, Rambler, Rapture, Rector, and Remnant claim much of the kennel heritage to which they are ornaments. They are the produce of Jonathan and Rally. The former is a son of Clarendon, and Rally is a daughter of Lord Fitzwilliam's Richmond. Short legs, good bone, and activity characterise this litter, and I can speak in high terms of Racket and Rector in their work. Rakish, Resolute, Rhapsody, and Rosalind claim Harlequin as their sire, and Ransom as their dam, and are well worthy of their parentage, the stamp of their father being most impressively conveyed.

In breeding these hounds Jem Hills has adopted a most important principle—never to overlook the necessity of endeavouring to

obtain good noses and working qualities. Since I last saw them, four years ago, they are certainly improved in their appearance, being shorter on the leg, and with quite as much bone as is compatible with activity. To Hills is due all the credit, as he has exercised his own judgment, uninfluenced from the first. It is not the pack only that is entrusted to his care, but also the horses, of which there are fifteen or sixteen very useful animals: indeed the whole of the establishment is under his supervision.

The kennels at Heythrop, which were in use for many years, were only erected with a view to temporary accommodation for the Duke of Beaufort's Hounds when they paid their accustomed visits, and they were very unhealthy. Some four years ago new ones were erected about a mile from Chipping Norton on the left of the road to Moreton-in-the-Marsh, and they possess every necessary convenience. There are many allurements to this neighbourhood, especially for those who prefer a quiet winter's sport without encountering the costly expenditure and revelling in the gaieties of more populous hunts. There is a good hotel at Chipping

Norton, and stabling to a great extent can be obtained at Mr. Biggerstaff's, whose love of horses prompts him to combine his wool-stapling speculations with ample and complete accommodation for hunters; and if any of his well-finished boxes are not tenanted by visitors' horses they are generally filled with his own, which are all of high pretensions. Still there is the all-powerful attraction, a very first-rate pack of hounds; and to hear Jem Hills' cheer, when they first find their fox, and his still more exciting and inimitable halloo, when he breaks away, is worth riding any distance to enjoy.

I do not believe any packs of hounds have this year, up to Christmas, 1862, had to boast of great sport, not, indeed, an average; but these have experienced more than most others. In the early days of the season they had a capital day's sport from Eyeford. After drawing those favourite coverts without a challenge they adjourned to Slaughter Copse, where, finding, they ran merrily over the hill, leaving Eyeford House on the left to Slaughter Village, and, with grass all the distance to Slaughter Copse, away again for Swell Bowl, up the hill to Stow-on-the-Wold,

where the fox was headed back to Upper Swell, and made his point straight up the hill to Foley's Gorse, and in one hour and thirty minutes the gallant pack ran into him in the farmyard at Donnington. The Crawthorne not holding a fox they went on to Sezincote Gorse, from whence a fine fox broke for the Crawthorne, leaving the village on the left for Moreton-in-the-Marsh, leaving that town also on the left, through Batsford Park, across the turnpike road near Bourton Wood, when, hearing the Cotswold hounds, the fox headed short back for Lord Redesdale's park, where the hounds rolled him over, close under the wall, after a clipping burst of twenty-five minutes.

Bledington Mill being in the midst of a good country, I made choice of that place to see the hounds in the field. There was rather a numerous assemblage, honoured by the presence of the Prince de Joinville, the Duke de Chartres, and a son of the Duke d'Aumale. Lord Redesdale was also among the number, and his interest in the proceedings of the day did not appear in the least to have diminished. Bruern Wood was visited—a cover of some extent, where, in

by-gone days, I have seen foxes requiring a vast deal of eloquent persuasion to induce them to leave, but it was not so on this occasion. The presence of the hounds appeared to be by no means welcome, and scarcely had they announced that there was a fox at home than a brace was viewed away. With the alacrity Jem Hills is wont to adopt, actively seconded by his son Tom, and Charles Roberts, the under-whip, the hounds were quickly out of cover, and, settling to the scent by Mr. Langston's Farm, ran at a merry pace to the Norrels, and leaving Meirecourt Farm on the left, reached Puddlicot Quarries, where there was a check. It was anything but a good scenting day, and all Jem's acknowledged skill and the exquisite hunting powers of the pack were called in requisition. Making one of his able casts, the hounds hit off the line across the Chipping Norton road, and across the Burford road among the stone walls. Leaving Chaddington on the right, the fox headed short back, crossing the Burford and Chipping Norton road for Sarsgrove. Here the greater portion of the field, who, appearing to have come to the conclusion that the run was

over, quietly waited in the road ; but the fox went straight through the cover, and over the hill to Boulter's Barn, leaving it on the right, across the Chipping Norton and Churchill road, down to Kingham Brook, over which Major Shirley and Tom Hills were the only two who rode. In Kingham fields there was a check, when a halloo back by the mill set all right again, and the hounds ran merrily for Churchill heath, leaving Churchill village on the left to Mr. Langston's pleasure grounds, where, among the shrubs, there was of course little or no scent, and here Hills' masterly tactics served him. Instead of leaving his hounds to contend with a difficulty verging on impracticability, he held them on to the extremity of the plantations, where, as the fox had left, they got again on fair terms, and ran him up to the Burford and Chipping Norton road, close to Puddlicot Quarries ; having him dead beat, the hounds were evidently running into him, but they were defeated, either by a sheep dog or some greyhounds which were near to the spot where they suddenly checked, and could never hit the line of the fox a yard afterwards. The hounds well deserved

blood, as none could behave better than they did, driving gloriously and carrying a good head when there was a scent to serve them, and when there was not, hunting with the greatest perseverance. Primrose, Mystery, Sailor, Racket, and Rector particularly distinguished themselves.

CHAPTER XI.

THE HOAR CROSS COUNTRY AND MR. MEYNELL
INGRAM'S HOUNDS.

Very nearly half a century has passed away since Mr. Meynell Ingram, with all the heritages of his highly-renowned ancestor, first became a master of foxhounds, though it is to be regretted that for several years he has not been able to participate in the sport he so dearly loves, and which he so liberally supports. On another occasion, when describing the primitive arrangements for hunting the Atherstone country, under the influential mastership of Mr. Osbaldeston, it was mentioned that he had only occupied the Sudbury district a brief period, which threw open a wider and finer scope for Mr. Meynell Ingram's enterprise than that with which he had a year or two previously

commenced. This augmentation formed a very superior country. Northwards it extends to Ashbourn, where the extensive hills of Derbyshire form a boundary, precluding the possibility of following hounds. The Sudbury country is a fine grass vale, very favourable to scent, abounding in brooks, with many strong fences; in wet weather, such as we have recently experienced, the land is awfully deep, therefore distressing to horses which require necessarily the highest attainments of blood, power, and condition, assisted, too, by all the auxiliaries of discretion and strong nerves. Here the science of the draining engineer does not appear to be highly appreciated, and treacherous bogs not unfrequently bring horses and riders to grief. The passes through gateways are frightfully deep, but there is one compensating and consoling consequence: the extreme wetness of the land in many situations precludes the possibility of cattle being depastured in the fields throughout the winter season; thus, although not altogether exonerated, hounds do not so often experience the checks and difficulties from that cause as they are exposed to in many other parts of Her Majesty's

dominions. The foxes hereabouts are of a fine gallant race; rejoicing in tendencies of the wildest nature, and not having any very extensive woodlands to hold them, they have but one alternative when the polite attentions of the pack alarm them, to fly for their lives with the utmost precipitancy. It is, nevertheless, a very difficult task to kill them, a conclusion at which I arrived on the first day I met these hounds at Radborne Hall, and my impression was confirmed by Tom Leedham. As there are scarcely any holding coverts, or points for foxes to make, their line of country is not guided by those accustomed instincts which enable observant huntsmen to make advantageous casts. Hounds generally unassisted must exert their powers. On the western boundary the North Staffordshire exchange courtesies, and on the eastern the county town of Derby intervenes between this and the country hunted by Mr. Musters. Lichfield defines the southern extent, beyond which, and in the direction of Ashby-de-la-Zouch, the Atherstone claims the privilege of hunting; and proceeding northward lies the Donnington side of the Quorn country. This is good, but not so heavy as the Sudbury

portion, and there is a greater extent of woodland, including Lord Chesterfield's fine preserves at Bretby. Again, taking Lichfield as a point, steering north-west to Stafford, there is a space, including Cannock Chase, which in olden times was a region much affected by foxes, but it is now devoted to the profitable production of coal, and the cheering sounds of hounds and horns no longer enchant the natives. West of Stafford the Albrighton country joins on; and then, proceeding in the line for Uttoxeter, the privileges of the North Staffordshire are continued to Ashbourn as already mentioned. This south-western portion, consisting of much light, bad-scenting land, is inferior to the other. The Midland Railway, from Birmingham to Derby, traverses from the south nearly in a north-easterly direction, affording every facility to wandering sportsmen of diversifying the scene of their enjoyments. From Barton station they get within easy distance of Catton, Gresley Wood, Drakelow Hall, Wichnor Park, Orgreave or Dunstall Hall. Burton-on-Trent is the point for Bretby Park, Ingleby or Swarkestone Bridge, Henhurst, Needwood House, Rolleston, and

Egginton, besides which there is another line running from Burton-on-Trent to Uttoxeter, handy for Hollybush Hall, Bagot's Park, Foston, and Sudbury, where there is a station, between four and five miles from Uttoxeter, which town is only distant from Loxley three miles and Chartley Park six. The Sudbury station is convenient for Hoar Cross and that vicinity. Derby serves for Langley, Kedleston, Radborne, Ednaston, and other places in the cream of the country.

From the very high estimation in which Mr. Meynell Ingram has been for so many years held, and from the sport his hounds have afforded, it would be an act of ingratitude unworthy of the country if foxes were not abundantly numerous in all directions; but when I introduce the names of Earl Chesterfield and Lord Bagot, Mr. Coke and Mr. Poole, it is a guarantee that wherever their property extends every effort is adopted to ensure sport. At the commencement of the season it was rather feared that in some places foxes were not quite so numerous as might be desired, but that proved to be a premature apprehension. In this, as in many other counties, the ingathering of the harvest was

procrastinated, and during the cub-hunting season a vast number of foxes were abroad in the corn fields, but they have been found again in their proper quarters since regular hunting commenced.

Like the family of the Smiths, in the service of the noble house of Yarborough, for whom several generations of that name were huntsmen (till very recently the entail was in abeyance but for one season only), the Leedhams have held the appointment as huntsmen to the Hoar Cross hounds by a sort of copyhold of inheritance ever since the first establishment of the pack. This distinction has with the Leedhams been remarkably significant, inasmuch as this, while there has always been a Leedham at the head of affairs, his first and second whippers-in have been either brothers or very near of kin. What can possibly proclaim more forcibly the generous and high-minded feelings of the master, or more significantly to the propriety of conduct and faithfulness of the servant? The first appointment to this enviable position was vested in Thomas Leedham, when his sons Joseph and Thomas whipped-in to him. He was succeeded as huntsman by Joseph,

who, in course of time, gave place to Thomas, in whom the rights and privileges remain ; his brother John officiating as his first whip, and his nephew Charles, son of Joseph the aforesaid, as the second.

The first lot of hounds that came into Mr. Meynell Ingram's possession, if I am rightly informed, were some with which the Honourable George Talbot had been hunting a portion of the Atherstone country. Naturally desirous to obtain as much as possible of the long-established and highly-famed descendants from his grandfather's pack, about the time when the Sudbury country was relinquished by Mr. Osbaldeston, an extensive addition was made from the Cheshire kennels, then under the administration of Mr. Heron, who, highly valuing the blood, bred extensively from the old Quorn celebrities. Being well off for walks, they are enabled to send out annually about fifty couples of puppies, affording an average entry of some twelve couples, which fills up the ranks without having recourse to assistance from other kennels ; and, having a good choice of sires, they are not accustomed to roam about for fresh blood. It is a very great object to breed from hounds whose

good propensities are known, and, more than that, the prevailing properties of antecedents, when more success must follow than by selecting superlatively fine symmetry, without any further guide to the inherent perfections of nose, tongue, and constitution. To repudiate such vices as skirting and babbling is a matter equally important. The Belvoir kennels have supplied much valuable fresh blood through their Regent, Druid, Agent, Trusty, Gambler, and Grappler, the Badminton through Foreman, the Brocklesby through Vaulter, Lord Henry Bentinck's through Warrior and Challenger, Sir Watkin William Wynn's through Royal and Admiral. The Honourable George Fitzwilliam's Bluecap and Mr. Lumley's Render have also been patronized. The chief dog-hounds of the kennel supply an extensive list. Alfred, a very clever hound, son of Alaric and Gadfly, is sire of the huntsman's choice in this year's entry, Fairplay, whose mother, Fancy, is a daughter of the Duke of Beaufort's Foreman; Fencer is also one of the same litter. Reginald, by Lord Scarborough's Reginald and Roguish, is the sire of several superior entries; Roguish is the issue of the Quorn Fugleman and Rosebud.

Alaric is by Falstaff and Agnes, representing the Belvoir kennels through their Flasher. Grappler is sire of Pilgrim, a useful hound of this year's entry, and here again they have the Belvoir blood. Hercules boasts of a numerous family among the working hounds, which adds vastly to his renown; he was a son of Adjutant and Hyacinth, whose ancestors are of Hoar Cross blood. Redrose, a daughter of Mr. Lumley's Render and Amulet, has produced more than an average number of worthies. The first season of her becoming a matron, three couples of her puppies were entered, and the following year two couples and a half. Fancy and Fairy, Racket and Rally, convey her good properties to the present generation. The kennels contain fifty couples of hounds, thirteen couples of which are in their noviciate. Rallywood, the produce of the Duke of Rutland's Rallywood and Graceful, is clever, and on short legs; and Valiant, a good-looking black, white, and tan hound, is the issue of Forester and Virgin. Pilgrim, by Grappler, his dam Playful, has much character in his favour. Fairplay and Fencer are the issue of Alfred and Fancy, one of the daughters of Redrose, by

the Duke of Beaufort's Foreman ; Fairplay has gratified himself wonderfully in favour with Tom Leedham, who pronounces him the best of the year. There is a good litter by the Duke of Rutland's Agent, consisting of Agent, Auditor, Adelaide, and Amethyst. The first of these is a dark black and tan hound, with very little white, with a truly sensible head, significant of fox killing, and from what I noticed of him in his work I was highly pleased with him. Amethyst has length, substance, and symmetry, calculated to include her in the list of future matrons. Royal, Rarity, and Relish, in the second season, are doing credit to their parentage. Sir Watkin Wynn's Royal is their sire, and Fancy their dam ; their constitutions are represented as being extremely good, and they afford an example of the great importance of breeding from superlatively good qualities on both sides the escutcheon. Dreadnought has been at work four seasons, and is a good-looking hound, with high character. Hebe, a remarkably clever daughter of Hercules and Celia, is of the same age.

'The Hoar Cross Hounds till recently have not had a vast amount of sport to boast of,

scent having been defective, but lately they have been highly favoured. On Saturday, Jan. 10, 1863, they met at Blithbury, and found a dodging fox, when after ringing about upwards of an hour, the hounds were stopped. Found a good fox in Spencer's plantation; away across the meadows to the right of Blithfield Rectory, and across the Rugeley road for Mr. Nicholl's pit; turned to the left by Stephen's Hill, across the Rugeley road again, through Blitheford to Yate; turned to the left, through the Warren coverts, and across the warren for Bagot woods; skirted them on the left through Lord's Coppice, to the right, to Mr. Charles, of the Moor, then to the left to Hart's Coppice, to Daisy Bank, turned to the right to Field House Coppice, and on to Bacon Bank; when it became too dark to persevere, and the hounds were stopped.

According to custom, the first week in every month the hounds go to Kedleston Inn, where there are temporary kennels, and on this occasion they had three days of extraordinary sport. On the Tuesday they met at the kennels, and a good fox going quickly away from the Vicar's Wood, the hounds

rattled him along at a merry pace to Murkiston, and on to Ravensdale Park, where they turned to the right for the new gorse, to Cross Hands, and a dense fog destroying every particle of scent, the hounds could hunt him no longer. Found again in Brewer's Car, and away for Winely; turned to the right to Farnley, from thence to Kedleston Park and back to the covert in which they found; out at the bottom again for Winely, but the fog still prevailing, they were obliged to give up their second as they had done their first fox.

An appointment for Radborne Hall, at all times an attractive one, was more than usually so on the 8th of February, reports of the excellent sport with these hounds on the three previous days having been circulated most extensively. The weather, too, gave promise of a hunting morning, and the convenient distance from Derby enabled a considerable number of visitors to consign their imperial persons to the indulgence of a railway carriage, and have their horses conveyed by the same mode of transit. There were representatives from the Quorn, the Atherstone, the North Staffordshire, and peradventure from far more distant hunts.

Foxhunting, like all other mundane matters, is not exonerated from the frowns or smiles of the fickle goddess. There are days when, woo her how you may, she will be peevish ; and at other times, when her favours are, perchance, less courted, the gloomy disappointments of the past are utterly banished from memory by the delightful passages of the present. Among the gay crowd assembled were Lords Chesterfield, Stanhope, and Bagot, with probably many other noble lords with whose identity I am unacquainted ; there were two Mr. Wilmots and Mr. Davenport, Mr. Clowes, Mr. Michael Bass, M.P., Mr. Moore, jun., two Mr. Fitzherberts, Mr. James Holden, Mr. Cooke, and, of course, the hospitable owner of the mansion, Mr. Chandos Pole ; but who comprised the remaining two hundred or more I cannot say. There was, however, one gentleman not present whose absence has been regretted all the season, and that was Mr. Hugo Meynell Ingram, who, from ill health, has been prevented following the hounds.

A quiet osier bed, a fascinating resort of foxes, had not been half drawn, when a halloo in covert from one of the whippers-in, quickly

succeeded by a halloo "Away" from the other, proclaimed that it was not a loitering fox the hounds had to deal with. Being very artistically handled, they were speedily out of covert, and, settling down to the scent, went scoring away at a great pace. Fortune favoured the pack. There was no possible means of getting out of the park except through a gateway, where the invariable practise of crowding vastly impeded progress; the hounds, happily, having room, were enabled to go to work, and the pace they maintained precluded the possibility of subsequent intrusion. Racing away for Langley Bottoms, they turned to the left, and ran nearly to Brailsford, and, still bearing to the left, leaving Longford on the right, went straight to Sutton; the fox was evidently desirous to regain his old quarters at Radborne, but the severity of the pace beat him from his point, and he kept on to Etwall, slipping through Mr. Moseley's gorse. At Etwall a fox was viewed by Charles Leedham, quite fresh; they had unfortunately changed, but there was no chance of stopping them. The hunted fox was seen by a servant at Etwell, who informed me he was not two

minutes before the pack, and, directing me the nearest way to get into the park, disappointed me of seeing anything more of the run, as the hounds turned short back to Dalbury and Tensley, then to the right to Sutton Hill, on the right again to Barton Park, by Church Broughton, to Foston, over the railroad at Sudbury station, and in attempting to gain some main earths in Needwood Forest, was drowned in the river Dove, close to Draycott Mill. Time, two hours and fifteen minutes. By a careful measurement of the distance on the Ordnance map it cannot be less than twenty-two miles. When the hounds got on to their fresh fox, they set to running, having the wind in their favour, at such a pace, that catching them was quite out of the question. Never was a field more scattered, and very few went to the end; among the names I have been able to collect as gaining that happy distinction, are the two Mr. Fitzherberts, Mr. Davenport, Mr. Cooke, and Mr. James Holden. No one went better to hounds than Mr. Clowes till, unfortunately, he lamed his horse seriously at a brook, and was therefore compelled to pull up.

The following Saturday they met at Swarkestone Bridge, and drew Gorstey Leys, where they found a fox, which must have slipped away unobserved, and they chopped another—scent very bad. Found again at the Heath—scent wretched; could do nothing. Another fox at hand in Repton Shrubs; quickly away on good terms, with quite a change in the scent, to Hartshorn Village, and without the semblance of a check, bearing to the left, reached Southwood, where the hounds divided, and I reluctantly bid them adieu.

These hounds possess many important qualities to an eminent degree. For chase they carry a wonderful head, yet they turn remarkably quick on the line of their fox, and they are very stout. It is evident that in breeding them great attention has been devoted to working properties, and more so than to superficial appearances.

CHAPTER XII.

THE LUDLOW HOUNDS AND COUNTRY.

There are few counties that have been distinguished from time immemorial by a more brilliant array of talented and enthusiastic sportsmen than Shropshire. The love of the chase is a special inheritance that has descended through many generations, and from the earliest period, when foxhunting first assumed a position as a venatic pastime, this beautiful and luxuriant county has been renowned as the birthplace of its warmest supporters. Many other attractions are offered to the sportsman in the way of shooting and fishing, and the hand of hospitality is extended with unbounded freedom. To those who desire to replenish their studs no county is more worthy of patronage. As nearly all the farmers are sportsmen, and as the fences are numerous and varied, a season's education

after hounds ensures the necessary acquirements of an accomplished hunter.

To enumerate all the Salopians who have singularly established their fame as masters of hounds and sportsmen in their native county and elsewhere would encroach on too much space; it is, therefore, imperative to confine the subject to those immediately connected with the Ludlow Hunt. Contemporary with the ever-celebrated Mr. Meynell, whose enlightened tastes threw a halo of refinement over the aristocratic plains of Leicestershire, Mr. Childe, of Kinlet, then in the full vigour of life, kept a pack of hounds, with which he hunted this his native country, and where he acquired that dashing and daring style of riding previously unpractised, for which he was so highly famed; but glowing with ardour for distinction in a more fashionable and populous hemisphere, he gave up his hounds, and in rival companionship with his friend and neighbour, Mr., but afterwards Lord, Forester, he went into Leicestershire, where these two celebrated horsemen set the example of riding to hounds which, from that time, it has been the ambition of every first flight man to

emulate, over the pasture fields of the mid-land shires. Of this gentleman the characteristic *soubriquet* of the Flying Childe, by which he was known, denoted the velocity of his meteor-like speed as compared with the pace of his associates. His motto might well have been adopted from the expression made use of by Hector to Andromache—

“ The foremost place I claim—
The first in danger as the first in fame.”

On Mr. Childe’s resignation as a master of hounds, the foxes enjoyed a few years respite, unless, indeed, that their lethargy was disturbed by any of the harriers kept in the neighbourhood that might occasionally stimulate them to a little constitutional exercise, till Mr. Adams, of Ludlow, established a pack, which would be about half a century ago. These hounds, I have reason to believe, were purchased from Major Bland, who had been hunting Worcestershire and the borders of Herefordshire with them, that gentlemen having had them transferred to him by Lord Foley. This was one of the crack packs of the day, but I am unable to trace them beyond the time when Mr. Adams retired,

which he did about the year 1820, when the country again became vacant for a few years. Subsequently to that period, Mr. Pardoe and the late Mr. Frederick Stubbs have had the hounds, the latter gentleman, on and off, some twenty years, having been relieved at intervals by Mr. Dansey and Lord Gifford. The indefatigable zeal and perseverance exhibited by Mr. Stubbs secured to him the greatest esteem and popularity, and he was supported in every respect except in the very important item of the exchequer, which, not being adequate to the expenditure, compelled him occasionally to draw on his own private resources—a condition of affairs which ought not to exist. Even gentlemen who keep hounds with the utmost liberality, without receiving any subscription, are not at all times exempt from annoyance. This has been very recently exemplified by the abuse of one of the oldest and most celebrated establishments in England in the columns of a journal which it could scarcely have been credited would have condescended to publish such contemptible, incorrect calumnies, which every sportsman acquainted with the circumstances knows to be void of truth,

and regards with indignation. The huntsman did not escape censure, but fortunately his reputation is too firmly established to be impaired or shaken by the paltry effusions of a writer who palpably contradicted himself, and manifested unmistakable proofs of being perfectly unacquainted with subjects appertaining to the "noble science."

Mr. Sitwell entered the M.F.H. list in 1854, and had temporary kennels at Bucknall, but that place being at one end of the country, and consequently inconvenient, new ones have been erected on the Downton Castle estate, about four or five miles from Ludlow, on the right of the Knighton road. They were well suited to the number of hounds required to be kept, and are very sound and healthy. This suggests a few remarks on kennel lameness, which may be worthy of notice. Mr. Stubbs's kennels, which were within a stone's throw of Mr. Sitwell's, were very confined and apparently inadequate, but if there were any kennels sounder than others I should say it was those. I have known many hounds so grievously afflicted with kennel lameness as to be totally unable to work drafted from other packs and

sent to Mr. Stubbs, where they recovered. I well remember a hound called Anchorite being drafted from the Albrighton in consequence of this painful malady, and on being removed to Mr. Stubbs's he became sound. Lord Gifford had him afterwards in the Vale of White Horse, and he was out on one of the most punishing days for hounds I ever saw. There is no doubt that hounds suffering from kennel lameness may be restored by removing them to sound kennels.

The present pack consists of thirty-three and a half couples of hounds; ten couples were entered last year, nearly all of which were bred by Mr. Sitwell. It is a very unusual thing to find so many as three couples of hounds all of one litter in the column of six season hunters, but such is the case, and it speaks plainly to their goodness. Waspish being engaged on maternal duties I did not see; the others are Warrior, Woodbine, Wildboy, Watchman, and Welcome, the three last the most worthy of notice. They are descended from Harold, a son of Lord Gifford's Grasper and his Hornet, and Wanton, a daughter of the North Staffordshire Wildboy and Delicate.

A very bony, short legged hound, Marksman, is by Tomboy, of the Badminton blood, and Milliner. Wrangler, a very useful hound in his fifth season, Mr. Charles Blakeway's especial favourite—and who shall gainsay the opinion of so good a sportsman?—is descended from Rummager—Lord Gifford's blood again—and Wanton, the mother of the three couples previously noticed. Gainer, by the same sire, a good, black, white, and tan hound, is smart and wiry.. Passing on to the next season, Hostess comes first for her share of commendation. Hotspur, a useful hound, is by Lord Stamford's Darter out of Handmaid, sister to Harold—a family which it should be observed came originally from the Berkeley kennels. Villager is fortunate in having established a high character, and is a clever shaped hound, by Lord Stamford's Vesper, his dam Milliner. Dryden and Dorimant are powerful and good-looking, by the Belvoir Duster and Trinket, a daughter of the North Staffordshire Trojan. From the same dam, but a year younger, and possessing much family resemblance, is Traitor and his sister Trickstress, both of a useful stamp—Wildboy is their sire. Wellington

and Waterloo are two neat little hounds, by Gameboy, bred by the late Mr. Stubbs, their dam Wildfire, a sister to Wildboy, Watchman, &c., but she is not of the same litter, being a year older. Whynot, another offspring of Wanton and Darter, is very good-looking and a capital worker. This Darter was a son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest and Sir Richard Sutton's Daphne. There are few hounds in existence so highly distinguished for the excellence of their descendants as these three brothers, Contest, Comrade, and Craftsman. There is scarcely a pack of hounds that I have visited during the last five or six years that does not possess some of their representatives, all of which do honour to their parentage and the Burton kennels. Good blood will distinguish itself both in horses and hounds, and breeders who respect it most are well repaid for their attention. Bluster and Baronet, though rather plain, are well spoken of for determination and stoutness. Brilliant is a capital worker, possessing a remarkably close affinity to the bloodhound, and with it a much greater refinement of outline and a combination of the qualities of the foxhound than I

could have expected to see, the dam, Bonny Lass, being the issue of the North Saffordshire Brilliant and a bloodhound bitch. Harold is the sire of the hound in question. Mr. Sitwell very judiciously appreciates the value of the bloodhound strain, having obtained the services of Wenlock from the North Warwickshire, a family I have had good reason to mention in the highest terms on other occasions. At the time I was at Leamington, Wenlock was paying his devoirs at these kennels, consequently he did not come under my notice; nevertheless, he is an old acquaintance. He possesses a distant cross of the bloodhound on both sides, being descended from the Wheatland Warrior and their Wanton. In height he is about twenty-three inches, a nice colour, black, white, and tan, with plenty of substance, and has all the characteristics of a superior foxhound. Commodore and Traveller are two-season hunters of rather singular appearance, a sort of mottled, hare-pied colour; the former, a remarkably neat hound, with good shoulders, is out of Trinket; the latter, a smart hound, but rather deficient in bone, is out of Timely, a daughter of Tomboy and Trinket. Dryden is

the sire of four couples in last season's entry. I should select Denmark, a fine black and white tan coloured hound, and Dairymaid as the cleverest. Wildfire is the mother of these two. Handmaid, of undeniable parentage, a daughter of Harold and Sir R. Sutton's Columbine, having received more care than usually awaits young foxhounds, from the fostering hands at Ferney Hall, the delightful residence of Mr. Sitwell, where she was reared, is a great and deserving favourite. Two couples, Reveller, Roderick, Rambler, and Remnant, the produce of the Albrighton Reveller and Trinket, are a useful litter, of nice size, and Remnant has already distinguished herself for wonderful determination and resolution. The height of these hounds, judging by the eye, is under three-and-twenty inches—perhaps, indeed, two-and-twenty and a half would be the average. It is a size admirably adapted to this country, where tall lathy hounds would be comparatively useless.

Having now served an apprenticeship as a master of foxhounds, Mr. Sitwell has been able to form his pack according to his wishes, and most successful has he been in the exer-

cise of his judgment. The excellent sport they have afforded, but most particularly this season, since the frost, is the best evidence of good management. All his predecessors hunted their hounds in person, but Mr. Sitwell has, from his commencement, entrusted that duty to Christopher Nicholl, who was first entered by Lord Gifford, about twenty years since, when his lordship brought some hounds from Ireland, and came to reside at Kyre, where he hunted a very confined country between this and the Herefordshire hunt. Nicholl went with his first master to the Vale of White Horse, and since then filled up his time with the Albrighton and other packs. He is well assisted in the field by Thomas Baker. Mr. Sitwell avails himself of the opportunities presented in a country so highly celebrated for breeding hunters by filling his stables with very superior animals, and those which he selects for his own use are quite of the first class. A very clever chesnut is ridden with great skill and judgment by Mrs. Sitwell, who takes vast interest in all the proceedings connected with the chase, and generally accompanies her husband, except when

the hounds meet in some of the very roughest parts of the country.

Where the love of hunting prevails among all classes so extensively as it does in this neighbourhood, the preservation of foxes follows as a matter of course, and this country possesses certain peculiarities essentially favourable to the vulpine family which do not exist, that I am aware of, in any other. The most remarkable of these is the Titterstone Clee Hill, a conspicuous elevation visible from a considerable distance, a mountainous tract, on parts of which huge masses of granite, varying in size, are distributed in all directions, some firmly embedded in the soil and others loose. Among these the foxes have their earths, or more emphatically their fortifications, for it is impossible to stop them out or bolt them, as they can work their way under the rocks and stones to a very considerable distance. The custom adopted when the hounds draw the surrounding country is to guard these entrances with a long range of fires, lit before break of day, when the foxes are supposed to be abroad on their nocturnal rambles. On the following day they are found in all directions in the surrounding coverts, dingles,

and hollow pits. When the first note of the hound implies danger, they fly to their accustomed hiding-places, but the appearance of the bonfires still burning, and guarded by a band of colliers employed to light and manage them, so astonishes and terrifies these wild denizens of the stony chasms, that pointing their heads to some distant woodland, with a fair scent, a clipping run is often the result.

During my visit, these hounds met one day at Bitterley, a well-known place at the foot of the hill, the hospitable residence of the Rev. Charles Walcot, and it afforded me an excellent opportunity, for the second time in my life, of witnessing this truly wild, romantic, and exciting scene. Several foxes were found, each of which afforded hunting runs varying in duration from thirty to forty-five minutes, but wind and storms prevailed, and it was a miserably bad scenting day. Every check increased the difficulties, and the hounds had no chance of tasting blood, nevertheless it enabled me to form an opinion on the pleasure of descending the hill at a steep part, near to what is called the Giant's Chair, where the huge masses of stone lie in the most chaotic confusion; and as in many

places there are bogs intervening, the riding is a service of some peril. Mr. Childe, of olden times, according to tradition, was wont to ride down these places with a loose rein at great speed, declaring it to be the safest plan, a practice upon which, however, I must be permitted to express some scepticism. A *bitterly* cold day it was when I was there, snow storms adding to the character, if not the comfort of the occasion, and the bleak exposure on the hill was most delightfully contrasted by the agreeable temperature of the interior of Bitterley Hall, where a substantial and most acceptable luncheon was prepared after the fatigues of the chase were over, to cheer the sportsman and fortify him on his weary journey home.

Wenlock Edge presents another singular feature in this hunt. It is a narrow chain of covert, with only occasional trifling intervals, extending a distance of eighteen miles. This is another stronghold and very favourite resort of foxes, and when they can be induced to face the vale below, called Corfe Dale, which consists principally of grass, with several brooks and very strong fences—a much finer country need not be desired. Parts of Wen-

lock Edge are claimed by two other hunts, the Wheatland and the United Pack, and being frequently routed the foxes are wild and very stout.

Since the foregoing was written a change has taken place, Mr. Sitwell having resigned in favour of Major Murray; and George Hills, from the Herefordshire, has been appointed huntsman in the place of Christopher Nicholl who entered into an engagement with Mr. Henley Greaves to hunt his hounds in the Old Berkshire country, which engagement was of brief duration. The hounds remain as before at their old kennels, and Major Murray has taken up his abode at the Wetmores, formerly the residence of that good old sportsman Mr. Stubbs.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE QUORN COUNTRY AND LORD STAMFORD'S
HOUNDS—THEIR OPENING DAY.

Several events have combined together to render the Quorn country first in the estimation of sportsmen of the highest order. The nature of the land affording every facility for the enjoyment of the chase in its most delectable form, was doubtless the primary attraction to noblemen and wealthy commoners to select Leicestershire for the pursuit of their favourite pastime. In the early days of foxhunting, before, in fact, it had become a “science,” the ever celebrated Mr. Meynell,—in his courtesy, talent, and zeal, far surpassing all predecessors or contemporaries,—drew the fashionables of the sporting hemisphere to the Elysian fields of this country. Many curious anecdotes have been related of that gentleman’s management



E. Corbet, del.

F. G. Netherdin, lith.

“HARK TO HOLL A”



of hounds and country, for which there does not appear to be any foundation beyond the fertility of brain which gave them circulation; but as so much interest appertains to the customs of by-gone days in this aristocratic county, I have taken considerable pains to ascertain facts, in which I have been most kindly and ably assisted by my late friend, Mr. Cradock, in whose possession there were documents and details, the authenticity of which cannot be gainsaid. A letter, dated Quorn, March 19th, 1800, from Mr. Meynell to the late Duke of Rutland, is thus worded : “Lord Sefton will take my hounds at the end of the season, and I know he hopes to succeed me in hunting the country ; ” and in another part the time of Mr. Meynell’s commencement is determined by the observation, “ When the country was made over to me forty-seven years ago.”

A most amusing and instructive little book called the “ Meynellian Science ; or, Fox-hunting upon System,” graphically written by the late John Hawkes, Esq., a very celebrated sportsman and companion of Mr. Meynell’s, affords a vast fund of information concerning the customs of those days, and

I trust his two sons, my kind friends, Mr. John and Mr. George Hawkes, will forgive me for availing myself of several extracts.

“ Mr. Meynell considered one of the important objects in breeding hounds was to combine strength with beauty, and stoutness with high mettle. The first qualities he considered were fine noses and stout runners. In the month of November the pack was carefully divided into the old and young pack. The old pack consisted of three-years-old and upwards, and no two-years-old was admitted except a very high opinion was entertained of his virtues and abilities. The young hounds were hunted twice a week, as much in woodlands as possible, and in the most unpopular coverts. When the hounds were cast, it was in two or three lots, by Mr. Meynell, his huntsman, and whipper-in, and not driven together like a flock of sheep. Whippers-in should turn hounds quietly, and not call after them in a noisy disagreeable manner. Whippers-in are too apt to think their own importance consists in shouting, hallooing, and unnecessary activity. Thoughtless sportsmen are apt to press too much on hounds, particularly down a road.

Everyone should consider that every check operates against the hounds, and that scent is of a fleeting nature—soon lost, never again to be recovered.

“Mr. Meynell’s hounds had more good runs than any pack of his day. Two very extraordinary ones happened. One was a run of one hour and twenty minutes, and, *without a check*, killed their fox. The other was two hours and fifty minutes, *without a cast*, and killed. Mr. Meynell’s taste led him to admire large hounds, but his experience convinced him that small ones were generally the stoutest, soundest, and in every respect the most executive.”

It is very clear that Mr. Meynell was gifted with the highest conceptions on matters connected with the noble science, and more than that, he had companions who could appreciate them.

A diary, too, that was kept during the last ten years of Mr. Meynell’s reign, by Thomas Jones, the whipper-in who wore a cork leg, likewise describes many observances and incidents which contributed to raise the fame of the master and his pack. From this source I have discovered that, besides

the establishment at Quorn, they had kennels at Bowden Inn for their accommodation when hunting the Pytchley side of their country; and it should be observed that when Mr. Meynell first began he kept his hounds at that place, himself residing at Langton Hall with Mr. Boothby, who at that time contributed towards the expenses. Quorndon Hall was a subsequent purchase from Lord Ferrers. Kennels at Bradgate are also mentioned, but I should imagine they were Lord Stamford's, and that his lordship offered the accommodation, as he had hounds himself at the same time. Where the hounds went to when they hunted Bosworth, Enderby, Whetstone, and Kirkby, in the Atherstone country, I have not been able to determine. They occasionally sojourned at Bradley for the purpose of meeting at Ravensdale, Kedleston Park, and Shirley. The temporary occupation of these numerous kennels most probably gave rise to the frequently expressed supposition that the hounds were taken the night before hunting to the immediate vicinity of the coverts they were going to draw, even if the distance did not exceed a few miles, for

which there is no authority to be found in the diary. That they could not have reached all their places of meeting from Quorn is quite certain, hence the necessity of the out kennels. Their most frequent places of meeting were Bunny, Widmerpool, Rempstone, and Wimeswold ; also Stanford Park, Queniborough, Costock, Walton Thorns, Swithland, Grooby, Bradgate, and Brooksby, and when they went from home to Bowden Inn they sought their pastime in Stockerston Wood. Billesdon, then as now, was in high repute—not omitting Langton Caundle, Allexton, Easton Park, Gumley, and Sheepshorns, near Shankton Holt. Time has not changed the prestige of these coverts—unequivocal testimony of their superiority.

The average number of foxes killed annually during the last ten years of Mr. Meynell's occupation was thirty-six brace, hunting three and occasionally four days in the week ; sometimes on consecutive days.

The stud devoted to the service of the men consisted of about twenty-eight horses, though it would appear they were frequently mounted by gentlemen who wished to have the unruly spirits of their steeds subdued.

An opinion very generally prevails that the hounds of olden times were more noted for their hunting powers than those of the present generation; that foxes were stouter and wilder, and that the runs they afforded were of longer duration. Jones's diary, giving accounts of all the sport during the time it comprises, does not confirm such conclusions. In provincial districts, where game is abundant, it is possible that foxes were formerly wilder, therefore stouter, than now; but in the Quorn country, during the last ten years of Mr. Meynell's mastership they were frequently rolled over in five-and-twenty or thirty minutes, and their propensities for running short were often noticed; it is quite evident the whippers-in resorted to a little telegraphing when in difficulties. It has been asserted, too—an error into which I must admit having myself fallen by adopting current information which was incorrect—that it was the custom occasionally to take as many as one hundred couples of hounds into the field. The largest number of hounds specified by Jones as having been taken out at one time, was fifty couples, which happened on the 6th of September, 1798, when

they went to Budden Wood, handy to the kennels; and from a manuscript list of Mr. Meynell's hounds for the year 1794, the number he had in kennel was fifty-four couples. It was their custom to work large bodies of hounds, consisting of some five-and-thirty couples, till the beginning of October, or after a frost, but the usual complement was from twenty-two to twenty-four couples. Every effort was adopted to keep the foxes, as well as the pack, in condition, as whenever there was a continuance of snow on the ground, the hounds were taken to the coverts to disturb the foxes, which were evidently very plentiful, as in ten years there were only eight blank days. A fox found at Gotham, and killed at Redhill, was singularly distinguished by having a white ring round his neck and three white pads. The lustre which Mr. Meynell shed so resplendently has not been allowed to fade by the masters of hounds who have succeeded him, though customs have happily changed with times.

Lord Sefton, Mr. Meynell's successor, kept two packs of hounds, and a huntsman for each pack, and introduced the custom now preva-

lent of having a second horse for his own riding. Lord Foley following in the year 1802, with unbounded liberality, permitted nothing to flag. The celebrity which Mr. Assheton Smith bore to such a venerable age was first acquired as Master of the Quorn Hounds, with which he commenced in 1807. He was the first gentleman in this aristocratic shire who set the example of hunting his hounds in person, a bold attempt, where every movement is regarded with the most astute criticism. After hunting the country ten seasons, the possession of Quorn-don Hall, with all its appurtenances, was transferred by Mr. Assheton Smith to Mr. Osbaldeston, whose exploits of all kinds are duly honoured throughout every portion of the civilised world where manly sports are recognised. It was not in the hunting field alone that he so brilliantly distinguished himself; in the various accomplishments of shooting, cricketing, steeplechasing, and race riding, severally he had scarcely a rival, in the whole unquestionably none, and his memorable ride against time at Newmarket will for ever afford an example of his great stamina and pluck.

Mr. Osbaldeston's appreciations were peculiarly adapted to the tastes of those who hunted with him in this country; pace was a *sine quâ non*. To find a fox quickly, the moment he broke covert, to get the hounds away in a body close to his brush, and, with anything approaching to a scent, to run into his fox in thirty or forty minutes was the summit of Mr. Osbaldeston's delight. When a cast became imperative, a bold one was his general custom. He either recovered his fox without loss of time in a masterly and most exciting manner, or he gave him up and went to draw for another. The echo of his cheering halloo still resounds in the ears of his admiring companions, too few of whom, alas! are left to tell of his glorious deeds. About the middle of the season, 1821, Mr. Osbaldeston exchanged countries with Sir Bellingham Graham, who was then hunting the Hambledon, in Hampshire; but Sir Bellingham only retained the Quorn one clear season afterwards, when Mr. Osbaldeston returned and hunted it till he removed into the Pytchley—an event which created sincere regret to his Melton friends. In the mystic art of breeding hounds he had

been eminently successful. He was a perfect judge of symmetry, hunting powers, and the necessary qualifications of a foxhound, not forgetting the value of stoutness, and duly appreciating pedigrees. The blood of his favourite hounds, Rocket and Furrier, though more than forty years have passed away since they were entered, is to be traced in all fashionable kennels; and indeed there are very few hounds of great celebrity which do not run back to one or both of them.

Lord Southampton, who succeeded "the Squire," built new kennels at Leicester, and, instead of their ancient title, the Quorn, being continued, they were distinguished as Lord Southampton's Hounds. Soon after his lordship's accession he purchased the Oakley Hounds, and they afforded first-rate sport. In 1831, Lord Southampton was succeeded by Sir Harry Goodriche, Bart., whose liberality, kindness of manners, and sporting talent gained for him the highest esteem; but, unfortunately, he was destined to preside over the hunting arrangements of Leicestershire but a few brief years. He was cut off in the prime of life, after hunting the country two seasons, during which period a removal of the kennels to

Thrussington took place as being more central. Sir Harry's decease placing all his unentailed property in the possession of his friend, Mr. Francis Holyoake, together with the hounds and horses, the country became his, so to speak, by inheritance. At this period the Marquis of Hastings, wishing for more hunting on the Donnington side, induced Mr. Holyoake to resign a portion of it, and a new district was formed, designated the Donnington country. Foxes becoming more numerous, this and similar arrangements which have taken place in other hunts have been attended with manifest advantages, affording much more hunting and at easier distances. Mr. Meynell, it may be observed, only hunted three and occasionally four days in the week. At the time to which I refer, the Quorn hounds had five appointments in the week, and the Donnington three, with, if I recollect rightly, occasional bye days; thus there was established nearly three times as much hunting as in the days of Meynell. Two years was the limit of Mr. Holyoake's occupation of the Quorn country. Having taken the name of Goodriche, and being elevated to the baronetage, he resigned to Mr. Errington,

and that gentleman only kept the hounds three seasons. Lord Suffield, with a profuse expenditure of the circulating medium, was expected to eclipse every predecessor in this aristocratic region; but unfortuitous events frustrated those hopes. His lordship obtained Mr. Lambton's hounds in exchange for the large sum of 3,000 guineas, and he built new kennels and stables at Billesdon, but only occupied them one brief season, when the hounds were disposed of to Mr. Robertson, again to travel northwards. It was a bad scenting season, and with hounds unaccustomed to be pressed upon by hard riders the sport was not equal to expectations, when Mr. Hodgson, coming from Holderness in 1841 with a remarkably hard-working pack of hounds, by a succession of good runs, redeemed the somewhat faded fame of this celebrated country. Two short seasons, however, terminated the career of this gentleman as master of the Quorn—he was every inch a sportsman.

After quitting the glories of Leicestershire, Mr. Hodgson retraced his steps to his former country where he had so very many friends; and in about two years an appoint-

ment as Registrar for the West Riding of Yorkshire was an acceptable acquisition to his private resources ; soon afterwards he gave up his hounds entirely. In the spring of 1863 he was called away from the cares of worldly strife, deeply regretted by hosts of friends. His unassuming manner and hospitality secured to him those kind feelings of regard which are ever an English gentleman's pride to boast of, and it must have been a sadly splenetic, vitiated taste that could ever have breathed a sentiment of reproach against him.

On Mr. Hodgson's retirement a committee took the affairs in hand, with Mr. Greene, of Rollestone, at the head, and it is worthy of remark that Mr. Greene, up to that period, was the only county gentleman who had ever been placed in a similar position. His great popularity and influence maintained for Leicestershire its long-accustomed fame, and it was during this period that Mr. Assheton Smith, then hunting the Tedworth country, but passing through from a visit to his friend Sir Richard Sutton in the Burton country, met at Rollestone, when I believe the largest field on record assembled from far and near to bid him welcome, where, in by-gone years,

he had been a leading star. Approaching more recent dates, in 1847, Sir Richard Sutton, preferring this country to the Cottesmore, Mr. Greene and the committee resigned in his favour. With a splendid pack of hounds, which he had been many years in bringing to perfection, making the old house his place of abode, the quondam glories of Quorn were thoroughly restored, and, in 1851, the Donnington country becoming vacant, was again united. No master of hounds of past or present days could exceed Sir Richard Sutton in that unceasing devotion to the “noble science,” which is indispensable with the perfection of sport. All his instructions, too, were ably carried out by his huntsman, Tom Day, who is now enjoying past reminiscence within hearing of his old friends in the kennels. A most liberal supply of the sinews of war was at all times available to meet any expenditure that might be necessary to ensure the desired object ; foxes were in great abundance, but, in the midst of all these happy combinations, the season 1855 was inaugurated with a sad reverse in the lamented death of Sir Richard Sutton, which took place about the middle of November. A melancholy gloom prevailed

throughout the country, and the reverential respect expressed on all occasions bespeaks the great popularity the baronet acquired. Sir Richard's hounds and horses were sold at Quorn, and the following season the country was entered upon by the Earl of Stamford and Warrington; it is almost needless to mention the most unbounded, the most princely liberality, prevailed in every department. His lordship had previously gained experience as a master of hounds, having some years since relieved the members of the Albrighton Hunt from all the expenses of hunting their country; this continued but one year, when his lordship retired for a time, but renewed his assistance to the Albrighton Hunt in 1855, when some little difference which existed between them and the gentleman who was hunting the country rendered an interference imperative. That desideratum accomplished, Lord Stamford removed his establishment to Quorn. The season of 1863, it is greatly to be regretted, terminated his lordship's brilliant career as the master of these hounds. The report had been circulated during the Houghton meeting at Newmarket, but it was not till his lordship caused official notices to

be given that the rumour was acknowledged, so reluctant were all to accept the intelligence.

His lordship commenced with purchasing two packs of hounds, Mr. Hellier's and Mr. Millbanke's, to which considerable additions were made from Sir Richard Sutton's kennels, and also Captain Thompson's. Mr. Hellier's may be said to have come originally from this country, most of his first purchases being divers lots of Mr. Errington's hounds, which were sold at Tattersall's in 1838, when that gentleman resigned the Quorn country. During the long period Mr. Hellier kept hounds, he devoted much attention to the breeding of them, introducing a good deal of the Brocklesby blood, and also the Belvoir. With such excellent materials to commence with, Lord Stamford at once established a very superior pack, which were entrusted to the care of Boothroyd, who hunted his lordship's hounds previously in the Albrighton country. He, however, remained only one season, when the horn was transferred to Treadwell, who continued to hold the very responsible post of huntsman till his lordship parted with the hounds. The Belvoir kennels have been

much resorted to for fresh introductions, Singer, Trusty, Contract, and Rallywood comprising the principal selections. Of late years the Quorn kennels have found nearly sufficient change in their own resources. Statesman, a great, fine hound, with abundance of bone, bred by Sir Richard Sutton, a son of Dexter and Stately, has not only good looks to recommend him, but he is descended from Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest, from whom I have in many kennels seen so much excellence to admire and praise. He is the sire of a numerous family, seven couples of working hounds, and seven and a half couples of the season's entry. Among the former is Barrister, a reddish, hare-pied hound, and Bluebell, of great pretensions, a good hardy colour, indicating a remarkably sound constitution; Hector, Hannibal, and Hudibras, three brothers claiming Honesty as their mother, have very good looks to recommend them. She is a daughter of Mr. Morrell's celebrated Hercules, and is herself a rich black, white, and tan, very attractive in her appearance. Among the five-season hunters is Osprey, a son of Sir W. W. Wynn's Orator; he has capital shoulders,

though perhaps somewhat short in his neck. Triplet, a nice, hardy-looking bitch of the same age, is a daughter of the Pytchley Trojan and Captain Thompson's Blossom. In the entry next in rotation Hamlet, a very nice hound, by Mr. Morrell's Herenles out of Sprightly, sister to Skilful, a purchase made by the Duke of Beaufort at Mr. Morrell's sale, is worthy of especial admiration; and Lancaster, a half-brother in blood, is lengthy and racing-like. In Marmion Treadwell places implicit confidence as unerring in the inestimable quality of finding his fox. It is an accomplishment in itself sufficient to exonerate a hound from being drafted, even if he should possess a fault. He was bred by Mr. Greaves, by his Marksman and Rachel. Marksman, however, was bred by Lord Fitzwilliam, a son of his Marmion and Caroline. Rachel, the dam of Lord Stamford's Marmion, was also bred by Lord Fitzwilliam, by his Ruler out of Ransom. Thus the honour is due to the Milton kennels. Sportsman, a fine, good-looking hound, with much bone, a three-season hunter, is by Duster out of Skylark, a daughter of Lord Henry Bentinck's Comrade, brother to Con-

test. Blissful, a wonderfully good sort, a daughter of Mr. Hellier's Barmaid, is the dam of Sophy, a black, white, and tan, to whom Treadwell gives great praise for the excellence of her nose. She is descended from the Belvoir Singer, who is also the sire of Scornful and Sportly, very much to be admired. They are, however, descended from Skylark, and, consequently, nearly related to Sportsman. The three last are two-season hunters; as are also Truemaid, Torment, and Telltale, by the Belvoir Trusty. Among the one-season hunters not already noticed I must not forget Affable, a daughter of Albert and Rachel, and Tarquin, by the same sire out of Tidings, by the Duke of Beaufort's Rufus and Sir Richard Sutton's Timely. A combination of such exquisite blood can scarcely fail to produce many excellent qualities. The name of Rufus reminds one of his son Comrade, who, although drafted, was shown to me. He appears to have been bred at Lord Fitzhardinge's kennels from Caroline, and is, therefore, own brother to his lordship's Chieftain. The list contains fifty-one couples of working hounds and sixteen couples and a half of this year's entry.

The long stable at Quorn, if my recollection serves me, was formerly constructed to accommodate six-and-thirty horses, but a portion of it being converted into boxes, the number of inmates is reduced. As there are three boxes at the extreme ends, the vast length of the building is to the eye diminished, but it still presents a most imposing effect of originality, the low stalls and the antique racks being still preserved. An inspection of these stables, containing altogether upwards of sixty hunters, is sufficient to dispel the dolorous expressions so constantly advanced, that England has lost the breed of valuable horses adapted to the purpose of the chase. That they are not abundant, or produced by every inconsiderate breeder who, only evoking the chances of fate, obtains few favours, cannot be gainsaid ; nevertheless, we do possess the good material if it be judiciously appropriated.

To enter into a descriptive detail of all the horses, enumerating every point of excellence that each of them possesses, would be a labour of inordinate length, and would trespass on the imperative restrictions of stable hours. I must therefore content myself with noticing those which principally attracted my atten-

tion, commencing with the highly-accomplished steeds which are accustomed to carry Lady Stamford triumphantly in the first rank. I should scarcely know which to select as the right horse to assign a preference, the one bearing the name of the Right Man or Trumpeter ; they are both magnificent animals, and so is Bentinck, a well-bred chesnut, son of Harkaway. Comet, a splendid bay gelding, having combinations of the Redshank and Melbourne families, does great credit to his ancestors. Phœnix—a very clever, short-legged, bay horse—and Rocket are included among the horses distinguished by her ladyship's favour. Charnwood, a dark bay horse ; Kegworth, a great, fine, lengthy chesnut ; and Bradgate, a grey, are ridden by Lord Stamford. Pilgrim, a dark brown horse, with very much of the Cotherstone stamp, attracted my admiration vastly ; a long, low horse, with great power. All these, including Sultan, are ridden by his lordship. In concluding individual notice, so far as it is possible to form an opinion at first sight, and that only in the stable, I should place my warmest affections on Silver-hair, a beautiful brown roan, daughter of

Birdcatcher; she evinces most unmistakable resemblance to the family from which she is descended. Extreme cleanliness of outline, with great muscular development, are essentials of the highest order in horses required to live the pace with hounds over the pasture fields of Leicestershire, inheritances which her grandsire, Sir Hercules, has transferred to his posterity on many occasions, together with the silver hairs which have doubtless suggested the cognomen of this charming creature.

The horses appropriated to the use of the men are of very high character; there is not a second-class animal in the stables, and among such a number I never saw such uniformly good shoulders. The model of that very important part appears to have been cast in one form; at any rate one very masterly eye has selected them. The starry brilliancy of coat affords incontestable evidence of great care having been judiciously dispensed on good constitutions: but a very remarkable feature is the perfect coolness and freshness of every horse's legs. Whatever casualties occurred last season they are all removed. Whitehall, however, to a great extent en-

lightened me on this point when he informed me that every horse had walking exercise throughout the summer; a most judicious practice, the advantages of which are clearly exemplified by the magnificent condition of the stud entrusted to his care.

The time-honoured custom of meeting at Kirby Gate on the first Monday in November continues to be observed as it has been, with only one or two exceptions, for very many years. The russet tinge of autumn was but just observable on the trees, the hedges were yet green, and the ditches were unmistakably blind. The majority of hunting men had not arrived on this their opening day.

The Exhibition, the protracted continuation of London enjoyments, and other contingencies, would, in all probability, keep many away till a later period than usual. Lord Wilton was expected as usual to patronise Melton, also Sir J. Johnstone and his brother; Count Batthyany had arrived, or was daily expected, and so of the Hon. J. G. Calthorpe, Mr. Craven, Mr. Leslie, Mr. Grant, Mr. Gilmore, Mr. Coventry, and Mr. Gasgoine. Lord Gardiner continues his old quarters at the Bell at Leicester, a sufficient guarantee for the excel-

lence of the hostelrie. Mr. Leigh, Mr. Arnold, Mr. Barclay, Mr. Sheward, Mr. Mecklewaite, and a host of others were on the list to augment the numbers in the hunting field. Although many absentees at Kirby Gate on the 3rd of November, there was a large assemblage at the appointed hour, and the road, as usual, full of carriages, occupied by those of the fair sex who prefer looking on to participating in the excitement of riding to hounds. An imposing feature on these occasions is the usually large assemblage of first-class hunters, and in this instance there was no evidence of deterioration from the exhibitions of former days. Indulging in exuberant playfulness, the accompaniment of high condition, they appeared to welcome the reunion with unmistakable joyfulness. Treadwell had drawn twenty-two couples and a half for the day's work, the mixed pack consisting principally of the ladies, looking very level, blooming, and fit to commence operations in this far-famed flying country. A trot of two miles to Garrety Hill disposed of the numerous body of foot people, and a fox was immediately found. It is a nasty covert for hounds at all times, being composed of a considerable

quantity of blackthorn, which at this early season punishes and lames them considerably; nevertheless, they speedily compelled the fox to break at the lower end, pointing for Burton Lazars, a place noted in history as being the first where leprosy made its appearance in England, a disease happily now unknown. Just as hounds were settling to the scent, only three fields from the covert, a sheep foil was in their line, but they carried the scent through it in a masterly manner, and without loss of time. They then set to running at a good pace, and before they had gone more than a mile, the unenviable condition of "a gentleman in search of a horse" was verified in more instances than one. Such was the extreme blindness of the ditches that mishaps were perfectly excusable in the most accomplished hunters. Leaving Burton on the right, and bearing to the left, in the direction of Kirby, before reaching that point the fox headed short, occasioning a check, which, on being recovered, he was hunted back, and discovered to have taken refuge in a drain on Mr. Copley's farm, close to Melton. On the hounds returning to Garrety Hill another was found, but there was evidently but little scent,

and some time elapsed before he felt himself disposed to face the open. At length a very fine young fox presented himself in the grass ground, in the direction of Burrow Hill, and sanguine hopes led to the pleasing expectation that he would face that delectable country; but these hopes were disappointed; without any reliable cause the fox worked his way to the left, running nearly the same line his predecessor had done, and was finally lost at very nearly the same spot where the first fox went to ground. The latter part of this run, till the fatal check occurred, was vastly interesting; but, as it very generally happens, when foxes get into buildings, as there is reason to suppose this one did, they escape, and this proved no exception to the rule.

It is painful to conclude with a disagreeable subject, and I can scarcely recollect any matter connected with foxhunting that occasions so much annoyance as the wires placed in the hedges for the purpose of strengthening weak places. On Monday, Mr. Stud, when hunting with Mr. Tailby, had his horse's entrails torn out by one of these dreadful devices; and a very valuable mare of Lord Stamford's, having got

away from the whipper-in, when he had dismounted to take up a hound, fell over an iron fence and broke her neck. This, it must be understood, is not introduced in connection with the wire traps, as it was a regular fence near a gentleman's house. With reference to the wire in fences, it is a subject of such paramount importance that I shall on a future occasion introduce it with a view to suggest some remedy.

A quaint old place is Quorn, classical in connection with all things appertaining to the chase. The old hall, where so many choice spirits have held their court, if its ancient walls could but recount the scenes that have been enacted within their precincts, might divulge some entertaining secrets. The church, too, affords a subject of peculiar interest in an antique tomb of the Hartham family, dating as far back as the time of the Crusaders. But the most interesting relic in the estimation of a sportsman is one of the hoofs and a piece of the skin of Eclipse, in the possession of the late Mr. Cradock. The foot appears to have suffered from contraction, and the sole bears evidence of what is termed a pumice conformation ; the front of the hoof is remarkably

thick, and has evidently been subjected to a very coarse rasp. There is another peculiarity worthy of notice—the shoe was attached with only six nails, showing that the system now frequently adopted of dispensing with the full complement of eight nails is not a novelty. The piece of skin is of a most brilliant chesnut. Poor Dick Burton made Quorn his last place of residence, and I regret to add that since my visit it has become his place of everlasting rest. Tom Day, another veteran of the chase, resides here within hearing of the pack, and through the kindness of Lord Stamford in frequently giving him a mount, he is still enabled to enjoy his favourite sport.

There are very striking analogies between the destinies of empires and the incidents which preside over the fates of hunting countries, and their respective decrees are often influenced by causes very nearly akin. The reign of a good and popular sovereign is almost universally distinguished by the prosperity and affection of his subjects. The success of a hunting establishment is also subservient to the good taste, judgment, and ability of the nobleman or gentleman who undertakes the reins of government. So far

the fortunes of either spring from causes coincident. There is, however, this difference. Kings very rarely abdicate; masters of hounds do so, sadly, too frequently. Since the occupation of the Quorn country by Mr. Meynell, whose brilliant career continued for forty-seven years, and terminated with the commencement of the present century, no less than fourteen masters of hounds have enjoyed opportunities of displaying their talents, dispensing their liberalities, and convincing the hunting world of the charms and delights that are so happily associated with Leicestershire. Fifteen changes, it must be observed, have taken place, Mr. Osbaldeston having on two separate occasions presided as master, always delighting his friends and followers with his enthusiastic, never-tiring devotion to the good cause. Thus the average term of premiership has scarcely exceeded four seasons; but Lord Stamford nearly doubled that period, and all honour is due to his lordship for the very profuse liberality exercised by him on all occasions when the promotion of sport could be anticipated. It is very remarkable that a country possessing so many agreeable acceptations and delectable attractions, gifted

as it is by nature for the enjoyment of fox-hunting in its most fascinating form, should have been subservient to such numerous vicissitudes. Soon after it became known that the report of Lord Stamford's resignation was not a vague rumour, Mr. Clowes, so well known in the country as a most brilliant performer, signified his willingness to become the future master. The sale of Lord Stamford's horses and its associations is an event that will long be held in remembrance at Quorn, bearing testimony, too, of the splendid establishment his lordship had provided to do honour to our great national pastime. The annals of the chase will hand to future generations the continuous fame of the Quorn establishments; while such animated biddings afford the pleasing assurance of the estimation in which hunters of high caste are valued by British sportsmen; for be it remembered that all the horses are destined to distinguish themselves again and again over the pasture fields of their native land, as none of them were purchased to go abroad. The prices they realised and the names of their new masters are thus distinguished:—

HUNTERS, THE PROPERTY OF THE EARL OF STAMFORD AND
 WARRINGTON, SOLD BY MESSRS. TATTERSALL AT THE
 QUORN KENNELS, MAY 9, 1863.

		GS.
Magpie, roan gelding, Mr. Ingwersol	.	15
General, grey, Mr. King	.	22
Lottery, chesnut, Mr. Haines	.	30
Victress, brown mare, Mr. Symmonds	.	55
Swallow, bay gelding, Captain Marryatt	.	65
Snowdrop, grey mare, Mr. A. Getz	.	150
Birthday, bay gelding, Mr. Catlin	.	60
Sorcerer, brown, Mr. Pedley	.	60
Gamecock, bay, Mr. Bulstone	.	42
Vaultress, bay mare, Mr. Thornhill	.	100
Daisy, grey, Mr. Ratcliffe	.	135
Hack, bay, Mr. Ratcliffe	.	26
Hack, black, Mr. Owen	.	17
Mermaid, bay, by Touchstone, Mr. Smith	.	85
Duxbury, bay gelding, Mr. Bass	.	70
Ladybird, bay mare, by Theon, Mr. F. Rowlands	.	100
Primrose, bay, by Black Eagle, Mr. Palmer	.	125
Bloodhound, bay gelding, by Windhound out of Mammifer, Mr. Catlin	.	140
Barnton, bay, by Barnton, Mr. Fisher	.	160
Cawston, bay, by Cotherstone, Mr. Carver	.	70
Lincoln, bay gelding, Mr. Clowes	.	80
Ploughboy, brown, Mr. England	.	115
Bentinck, chesnut, Prince of Wales	.	500
Forester, chesnut, Lord Dudley	.	400
The Right Man, bay, Prince of Wales	.	310
Protector, chesnut, Mr. Chaplin	.	380
Pilot, chesnut, Mr. W. O. Forster	.	520
Vulcan, bay, Mr. Chaplin	.	245
Excelsior, grey, Mr. Ramsden	.	190
Comet, bay, Mr. W. O. Forster	.	500
Pilgrim, bay, Mr. Clowes	.	200
Rattrap, chesnut, Mr. Murray	.	270

		GS.
Phœnix, bay, Lord H. Bentinck	.	400
The Hare, chesnut, Mr. Ewins Bennett	.	280
Old Times, black, Mr. Paget	.	190
Burgundy, bay, Mr. Clowes	.	210
Sultan, brown, Lord Middleton	.	310
Merry Tom, bay, Mr. Denham	.	250
Cornelian, chesnut, Mr. Morrison	.	310
Groby, bay, Mr. Powell	.	125
Planet, bay, Mr. Evans	.	200
Warrington, bay, Mr. W. Craven	.	450
Rocket, bay, Marquis of Hastings	.	480
Rifleman, chesnut, Mr. Cotterill	.	420
Harkaway, bay, Sir F. Johnstone	.	250
King of the Forest, bay, Mr. Chaplin	.	310
Pale Ale, bay, Duke of Buccleuch	.	160
St. Ronan, bay, by Minotaur out of Miss Mowbray's dam, Lord H. Bentinck	.	420
Charley, bay, Mr. F. Rowlands	.	100
Emerald, chesnut, Mr. Neathercote	.	120
Billy the Beau, chesnut gelding, Mr. Wragg	.	100
Convict, chesnut, Mr. Clowes	.	100
Envile, brown, Mr. Randell	.	300
Harlequin, bay, Mr. Leinster	.	55
Blondin, bay, Mr. Holman	.	90
Bullfinch, bay, Sir F. Johnstone	.	150
Protectionist, bay, Mr. Chaplin	.	150
The Clipper, chesnut gelding, Lord Middleton	.	175
Miss Bean, chesnut mare, Marquis of Hastings	.	170
Conqueror, brown gelding, Mr. Lyons	.	95
Monarch, bay Mr. Clowes	.	55
Volunteer, brown, Lord Dacre	.	270
Cardinal, chesnut, Lord Harrington	.	155
Silverhair, bay mare, Lord A. St. Maur	.	125
Whittington, black gelding, Dr. Marsden	.	160
Cartridge, bay, Mr. Haigh	.	250
Kegworth, chesnut, Mr. Bulstone	.	185
Sunbeam, bay, Mr. White	.	170
Charnwood, bay, Marquis of Hastings	.	460

	GS.
Black Doctor, black, Mr. Duncombe	. 105
Sky Lark, brown mare, Sir F. Johnstone	. 310
Broadgauge, bay gelding, Mr. Pott	. 105
Beauty, bay mare, Captain Marryatt	. 65

Mr. Clowes has entered the list of M. F. H.'s under most inspiring auspices, and let us hope that his mastership will be as permanent and prosperous as that of any of his predecessors. On the Tuesday previous to the sale of Lord Stamford's stud, Jack Goddard entered on his new engagement, and took charge of the hounds, they having been transferred to Mr. Clowes for the valuable consideration of 2,000 guineas, and he is fortunate in having secured them. The breaking up of an established pack of fox-hounds is an event of far more serious import than casual observers are wont to contemplate. Hounds of superior pretensions, when taken from their old associates and introduced to fresh ones, not unfrequently display characters quite the reverse to those whereby they gained their fame. Difference of country will, in some instances, produce this change of manners, and different management often exercises still more powerful influences. Many a slow, close hunting hound, whose melodious

voice is invaluable in the dense woodlands of a provincial country, may be quite out of his element over the open fields of Leicestershire, where pace is indispensable. It is not a very difficult matter for a master of hounds who has had practice, and is gifted with an eye for symmetrical proportions, to collect a lot of handsome rogues, if he will only be industrious, and search for the beauties that are condemned and drafted for vices and misdemeanours. But how will such pretenders deport themselves? They may have runs, with two or three couples leading, doing all the work, with the remainder following in the rear, at wide intervals, doing nothing, unless perchance “babbling behind,” than which the antecedent failing is far more venial. Such collections—packs of hounds I cannot call them—may kill foxes, but the manner in which they accomplish that *desideratum* will not bear description. I have witnessed such performances, but I decline the honour of recording them, so let them pass without further comment. Mr. Clowes is fortunate in having no such difficulties to contend with. He has got a clever pack of hounds, composed of good materials.

Besides those bred at the Quorn kennels for next season's entry, he has procured an unentered draft from Sir W. W. Wynn's, among which are two couples descended from the Duke of Beaufort's Harlequin, and several others by sires from the Duke of Rutland's and Lord Yarborough's kennels. Of their own breeding I was pleased to see six couples were the progeny of the Worcestershire Sportsman, whose excellent parentage can scarcely fail to perpetuate many valuable properties. Sportsman is a son of the Warwickshire Saffron, a hound I have on many previous occasions described in high terms of praise, and the Berkeley Charity, a daughter of Drunkard and Cora. Drunkard, a son of Hotspur and Danae. Cora, daughter of the Duke of Rutland's Chaser and Housemaid. Hotspur, son of the Duke of Beaufort's Regent and Harlot. Sportsman, it will thus be understood, was bred at Berkeley, and went to Worcestershire in his puppyhood. Honesty and Triplet have produced very promising litters to Sportsman; the former is a daughter of Mr. Morrell's Hercules and Tidings, the latter of the Pytchley Trojan and Captain Thompson's Blossom.

In a country like Leicestershire, where the agriculturists are so deeply indebted to fox-hunting, it is truly remarkable that greater facilities are not afforded to masters of hounds for walking puppies. With the exception of the late Mr. Greene and Lord Stamford none of the former masters had landed estates in the county; but what of that? Many of the noblemen and gentlemen who have hunted the Quorn country have annually disbursed little fortunes, of which the farmers have had the lion's share; besides the immense sums circulated by the wealthy frequenters of Melton and Leicester, together with vast numbers who rent mansions for the express purpose of hunting in this the most fashionable of all counties. Farmers may conjecture that it is a matter of little importance—that affluent masters of hounds can purchase what they require. So they may, as regards numbers, but not perfections. They can never obtain a first-rate pack of hounds except by breeding them, at any cost. The farmers of Leicestershire are fond of the sport; they are prosperous and hospitable, and they possess all the fine attributes that distinguish their class. That they should permit themselves to be

immeasurably excelled by others in the provincial countries in their appreciation of that which so prominently conduces to the excellence of the pack, that not only affords them sport, but which also promotes their welfare, is an anomaly I cannot comprehend; and I am much inclined to the conclusion that several masters of hounds have withdrawn from this cause, for nothing identifies a gentleman with the country he hunts more significantly than the cordial co-operation of the cultivators of the soil.

Many who were present at the sale of Lord Stamford's stud, will remember the kind hospitalities proffered by Mr. Cradock, and they, with very many others, will most sadly grieve that it was the last time of his bidding them, on a public occasion, one of those friendly welcomes he so happily delighted in. His health had been on the decline for some time, and it was too evident that his exertions on the day of the sale considerably overpowered him. The nature of his complaint daily reducing his strength, he departed this life on the 7th of September, 1863.

Mr. Cradock and his family had been associated with the preservation of the foxes

in the Quorn country very many years. A great proportion of the gorse coverts for which this hunt is famous, have been from time immemorial rented by the masters of hounds or others interested in the sport. The management of them, and the preservation of the foxes in the days of Mr. Meynell, and for a long period subsequently, was sedulously presided over by Mr. Cradock's father; after that by his brother, till about the time when Mr. Greene followed Mr. Hodgson, upon which the gentleman whose loss is so much deplored succeeded to those ostensible duties. It is thus manifest how great are the obligations to the family. Gifted with the highest attainments and most conciliating habits, calculated to insure popularity and respect for his wishes, Mr. Cradock's objects were successfully carried into effect. The gratitude of sportsmen was due to him for many a gallant fox and many a good run. Nor has this been forgotten. A handsome gold snuff-box equivalent in weight to 100 guineas, presented to his father, has descended as an heirloom and a pleasing memento of olden times. A costly candelabrum was the graceful tribute of Sir Richard Sutton. More

recently, in April last, the appreciation of the country was more significantly displayed by the presentation of plate to the value of 200 sovereigns, as an appropriate compliment to Mr. Cradock. It comprises a large silver salver, two pairs of candlesticks, and a pair of stands or epergnes, with raised dishes for fruit or flowers, beautifully embossed and frosted. On the base of one of the stands is a beautiful group of a fox with her cubs, and on the other a hound is exemplified running with a breast-high scent. The salver bears an inscription denoting the purpose :—“Presented (with other plate) to Thomas Cradock, Esq., by noblemen and gentlemen of the Quorn Hunt, in testimony of their appreciation of his zealous and gratuitous services as treasurer and secretary to the Hunt for a period of upwards of twenty-three years. April 10, 1863.” Not only in connection with his long and indefatigable exertions in behalf of England’s noblest pastime will Mr. Cradock’s loss be felt, but with reference to the general benefits which it was in his power—and more than that, his greatest pleasure, to dispense; combined, too, with the social amenities of private life, his departure from

among his family and friends is most sincerely felt.

How many now will miss that kind,
That open-hearted smile,
So full of gladsome welcome,
So void of hateful guile.
How many now will think upon
The happy tales of old,
Now the kindly voice is silent,
And the friendly heart is cold.

Years may roll on, and still thy name
Untarnished yet shall be,
Enshrined within a jewelled crown
Of pleasant memory.
Of thine unbounded good
How many a one will tell,
For thou could'st not have an enemy,
Kind friend! alas! farewell.

CHAPTER XIV.

MR. TAILBY'S COUNTRY AND HIS HOUNDS.

The antecedents of Mr. Tailby's country may be traced to Mr. Noel, whose name has been introduced in the Cottesmore, and from the period when Mr. Meynell first enlivened the plains of Leicestershire with hound and horn to the year 1856, when Mr. Tailby became the master, no division or alienation of this portion had ever taken place. It may be said, indeed, rather to have taken precedence of the far-famed Quorn district; as Mr. Meynell, when he first kept hounds, resided with his confederate, Mr. Boothby, at Langton Hall, when the kennels were at Great Bowden Inn, bordering on Northamptonshire, and there is reason to believe a portion of the Pytchley country was included in his prerogative. A year or two before Sir Richard Sutton's decease,

having a large extent of country by the addition of the Donnington, he conceded a considerable portion of that which now forms Mr. Tailby's to his son, Mr. Richard Sutton, then residing at Skeffington, where kennels were constructed, and, assisted by Boothroyd, Mr. Sutton, with great skill handled his own pack, affording first-rate sport. Great, indeed, was the disappointment when it was ascertained that none of Sir Richard's sons would continue to keep hounds; so, finding that to be the case, Mr. Tailby came to the rescue with liberal spirit, locating his hounds at Billesdon. It was at this village that the late Lord Suffield expended so large a sum of money in building stables, kennels, and such like auxiliaries, on a scale of magnificence and extent probably never equalled. Fame once established, associations cling with wonderful persistency, and my imagination led me to the supposition that Mr. Tailby was deriving the advantages of Lord Suffield's unbounded liberality; but great indeed was my surprise on my arrival at this far-famed spot, at finding that the kennels were converted into tenements for the human race, and that the stabling only was appro-

priated to the use of the present establishment. Mr. Tailby has, therefore, erected kennels sufficient for his purpose, devoid of ostentation or display. The limits of Mr. Tailby's country are bounded on the west by the Quorn, the road from Northampton to Leicester being nearly, if not distinctively, the demarcation; then, traversing in a north-easterly direction beyond Syston Junction, diverging still more to the eastward, it joins the Cottesmore, a portion of which, westward of Oakham, has been conditionally given in. The prevailing impressions connected with the surface of Leicestershire are perhaps erroneous. Conjectures frequently indicate that it is nearly, if not quite, a flat, whereas there are numerous undulations and hills sufficient to pump the horses, however perfect the assiduity of their grooms may render their condition. It has, too, undergone many material changes; much more land is under the plough; from what cause, where it is so thoroughly adapted to grazing, it is rather difficult to define. Probably a considerable quantity was broken up when corn bore a remunerative price, and has never been restored to its primitive condition. The double posts and rails which

at one period were numerous, affording such fine opportunities for hounds to outpace the horses, and for horses to roll over their riders, are now almost entirely superseded by the black-thorn hedges, for the protection of which the rails were originally constructed. There is, as heretofore, much timber to be met with in the corners of fields and in the weak parts of the fences; but recently most diabolical contrivances have been introduced in the form of wire, which is not visible to the quickest eye, when hounds are running, till it is too late to avoid the insidious tram-mels. The Legislature has interfered with powerful effect to restrict the practice of wiring hares; it is much to be regretted that men and horses are not included in the category of game, and protected from the fearful predicament of being ignominiously snared. But it is a subject of too serious importance to make light of, for unless some measures are had recourse to, more sad accidents are certain to occur, and fox-hunting must soon become a sport of the past. Within a mile and a half of Melton, there is a single wire, about three feet high, running parallel with a field road, by which

I was as nearly as possible being victimised. The object for so placing it can simply be to prevent anything passing along the road from trespassing, and being only the breadth of the road from the fence over which I had ridden, the hounds running hard and straight across the field, I was nearly on the wire before I caught sight of it. The reasons assigned for the use of these wire impediments are economy, and in some places deficiency of timber wherewithal to make good the fences. So great has been the outcry against trees in hedge rows, that on several estates they have been nearly exterminated. Too great a profusion of trees is doubtless injurious, and the other extreme is equally objectionable. I would be the last to wish farmers to incur unnecessary expenses to their disadvantage, but I am certain all reasonable men, even if they do not participate in foxhunting, will concur that it is an amusement of the utmost importance to their profits, interest, and welfare, and in no county is it more essentially so than in Leicestershire. The immense sums of money annually expended by noblemen and gentlemen who take up their winter quarters at

Melton, Leicester, Market Harborough, besides almost every village within the county in which there is a residence of fair pretensions, is evidence incontestable of the benefits the farmers in the neighbourhood derive from foxhunting, and surely they cannot be so blind to their own interests as not to be convinced of the bad policy of opposing such impediments to their best friends. In Mr. Tailby's country, as it is well known, there are many fences formidable enough to stop any man or any horse, but they are visible and therefore legitimate. Wire fences, not visible, are not only illegitimate, but, in a sporting sense, they convey by their use a deficiency of that kindly feeling which it is the boast of every true-hearted farmer to display. The progress that has been made in the art of draining is manifest in the greater soundness of the land, contributing vastly to the convenience of horses; this refers to the country generally. The pasture fields are greatly improved, though occasionally you come to some arable land deep and distressing; but the old system of ridge and furrow on those soils appears to be gradually decreasing, from the modern

influences of the draining engineer. Nevertheless, the pasture fields, the surfaces of which have never been disturbed in the memory of the present generation, still present the ridge and furrow, which, when hounds run fast, bring many horses who have a long stride, to grief, unless they possess the accomplishment, which very few have, of accommodating their step to the form of the ridge. Draining has, no doubt, diminished the capabilities of the land for holding a scent, while the sheep and cattle stains prevail to a very great extent. The goodness of the soil permits the cattle to remain in the pasture fields throughout the winter; thus they are not, as in many other counties, confined in the farm yards—a practice, by the way, which I firmly believe to be more conducive to profit, where proper shelter is afforded, than leaving them exposed to the inclemency of the elements. Housing stock during the winter is in other counties found to be advantageous; why, therefore, should Leicestershire be an exception?

The preliminary arrangements having been completed for Mr. Tailby to hunt the country, the formation of a suitable pack of hounds

became a consideration of paramount importance. Those who have made the attempt in the provincials have invariably found it an arduous task; how much greater, therefore, in one like this, where the keenest eyes of criticism are ever on the alert. With exquisite judgment Mr. Tailby enlisted the matured experience of the veteran Tom Day, and with a liberal, enterprising spirit, together with the keenest ardour for sport, they set to work in right good earnest. The hounds with which Mr. Richard Sutton had been hunting the country, consisting principally of choice selections from his late father's kennels, being offered for sale at Quorn, afforded an excellent opportunity to commence with, and of these, eleven and a half couples are included in Mr. Tailby's first list. There were also ten couples from the Pytchley, four couples from Mr. Colyer's, two couples from Lord Fitzwilliam's, the like number from Mr. Millbank's, and the remainder, in all thirty-seven couples, came from various kennels of repute. The first season over, the horn was transferred to John Goddard, and in addition to hounds bred at the Billesdon kennels, the present year's list

includes a considerable number of remarkably good-looking hounds, purchased at Mr. Drake's sale last spring, comprising a vast deal of the Belvoir blood. The price given for the two lots of four couples each was 405 guineas, only one of which has been drafted. The Billesdon establishment is very fortunate with this season's entry, consisting of eleven couples; Nabob, Nero, and Norma are particularly clever, descended from Noble (a black and white hound, showing great style and quality, a son of Lord Yarborough's Noble and the Duke of Rutland's Dulcet) and Actress, a daughter of Lord Fitzhardinge's Andover, whose pedigree will be introduced. Norma is entitled to special distinction, one of the cups annually presented by Mr. Tailby for walking puppies falling to the share of the farmer to whom she was entrusted. Juggler and Juryman, the former another cup hero, are fine, powerful young hounds, sons of Clasher and Judy, the dam a combination from the Pytchley and Milton kennels; Julia, of the same litter, is remarkably neat, though somewhat light of bone. Attica, a very nice black, white, and tan bitch, and her sister, Artifice, equally

clever, are by Nimrod; their dam Artful, sister to Actress. Cardinal, Caroline, and Captive, are all clever, especially Caroline; they are the progeny of Noble and Charity, of Pytchley origin. There are thirteen couples of hounds in their second season, whereof Wildboy stands pre-eminent, having secured a cup for the guardian of his puppy-hood. He has two very good-looking brothers, Warrior and Watchman, and two sisters, Waspish and Welfare, greatly to be commended; their sire is Workman, and their dam Lively, daughter of Sir Richard Sutton's Rasselias and his Lightsome. Gambler, a very useful hound, is a son of Workman and Gaiety. The list of second season hunters is strengthened by three couples from Mr. Drake—Comrade, Dowager, Homily (a light hare-pied bitch, very fashionable), Countess (a fine lengthy bitch), Duster, and Hector. Ten couples comprise the three season hunters, whereof to Termagant must be assigned priority of place, a cup having been awarded to the kind protector of her juvenile days. Roman and Rattler evince great character and usefulness; their parentage is of high distinction. Druid, their sire,

is by Lord Fitzhardinge's Dervis, and his Holocaust, by Hector, a son of Hotspur and Nettletop. Dervis was by Dorchester and Midnight, all of them running through a long line, bred at the Berkeley kennels, by the late Earl. Druid is a dark black and white hound, with little tan, of great bone, proclaiming a hardy constitution, and he possesses the inestimable qualification of nose. Smuggler, Sultan, Sailor, and Sportsman, of the same year, are entitled to claim especial notice; they are the produce of the Oakley Sultan and Sylvia. First in the list of hounds that have been entered four seasons, and demanding particular respect, are Andover, Abelard, Arrogant, Amazon, Artful, and Actress. It is not often that so many as three couples of hounds, all of one litter, are kept in work to their fourth season; and this is a fact quite sufficient to proclaim their goodness, and the soundness of their constitutions. Actress and Artful have already been introduced as the mothers of two capital litters just entered. These hounds are bred from Lord Fitzhardinge's Andover and Barbara, by the Pytchley Barrister, and their Songstress. Andover was a son of the late

Earl Fitzhardinge's Abelard and Airy, daughter of Mr. Foljambe's Albion, Abelard, by Hector, already mentioned as the sire of Holocaust. The good qualities of the Berkeley blood are eminently conspicuous. In the following year's entry, consisting of five couples, is Judy, a very clever bitch, bred by Lord Fitzwilliam from Harmony and the Pytchley Juggler—Judy's produce has been already noticed. Among the lots purchased from Mr. Drake, and in his sixth season, is Lucifer, a fine old hound, nearly black, with a head shaded with a light tan, remarkable for its smallness, and, if I may be allowed to introduce such a term, delicacy of expression, portraying much amiability of temper.

John Goddard, who has now commenced his sixth season with these hounds, began his pupilage as second whipper-in to the ever-celebrated Jem Hills, when the Heythrop country was originally established, and in the course of two or three years he gained his first step of promotion, where he served more than two terms of apprenticeship as head-whip, very greatly to the satisfaction of every one who hunted with those hounds,

as I can personally testify. His fine horsemanship enabled him always to be in his place, and it is impossible to conceive anything more perfect in its way than the artistic method which Jem Hills practised of lifting his hounds when the fleeting scent, so prevalent on the Cotswold Hills, would not afford them the opportunity of hunting up to their fox. The quiet alacrity Jack adopted of "putting them on" to their huntsman was an example for whippers-in to imitate. To see a man follow and rate hounds instead of getting to the head, when he wants to stop them from riot, or a fresh fox, which I have occasionally seen done by muffs wanting in tact and experience, is an abomination not to be endured—enough to awaken from their peaceful slumbers the ashes of Mr. Assheton Smith. Leaving the Heythrop, Goddard tried his hand as landlord of the White Hart, Chipping-Norton, where he had lots of kind patrons; but drawing coverts was more to his taste than drawing corks—so, after a very short probation, he travelled northwards to whip in to the Holderness, and afterwards to Lord Henry Bentinck's hounds. A horn

being vacant in the sporting county of Salop, he was appointed to hunt the hounds for Mr. Morris; which he continued to do till the period when he engaged with Mr. Tailby. As a huntsman he is cheery with his hounds, and their very excellent condition is a sure test of his attention to the kennel department. At the close of the season, 1863, Goddard left these hounds and made an engagement with Mr. Clowes to hunt the Quorn, when he was succeeded by Frank Goodall, from the Cottesmore.

Mr. Tailby's country, consisting almost entirely of small coverts, is ill adapted for cub-hunting; in fact, that is the only thing in which it is defective, there being so little opportunity to work young hounds. The lateness of the harvest, too, delayed the commencement of operations in the year 1862, till the middle of September, but when they did begin they found a fine show of foxes, and during the month of October scent was favourable, affording some good gallops over the open. The morning on which I went from Leicester to meet these hounds, at Stanton Wyville, was bright in the extreme, the dewdrops glittering on the sprays, ill

omens of a scent; but on reaching Kibworth there was a dense fog, so thick that you could scarcely see fifty yards around—such is the variableness of atmosphere in this climate. This fog extended around the place of meeting, causing some delay in throwing off. There was a tolerably large field for so early in the season, including many well-known faces from far and near. The proximity to the Pytchley enabled several members to attend, among whom were Lord Hopetoun and Mr. Villiers. After waiting beyond the usual hour, for the fog to clear away, the hounds proceeded to Langton Cauldwell, where they soon found a fox, which broke across the valley to the patch of gorse beyond, where there was another fox, and the body of the hounds meeting one of them, unfortunately demolished him. A gentleman in black, eager for a start, might have been the unintentional cause, but as I did not hear that the master made any complaint, it would be uncourteous for any other person to do so. There was, however, no time for delay, much less to break up the dead fox, as his companion quickly quitted his quarters, but, as might have been anticipated, there was only

an indifferent scent, and hounds had to work the line, which they did with remarkable truth and industry. Some sound turf, however, favoured their efforts, when they settled down at a fair pace, their musical notes indicating their whereabouts; for at this point the fog was again so thick that they could not be seen a field off, and on reaching Welham a check occurred which could not be recovered, a cattle foil increasing the difficulty. It was afterwards intended to draw a covert of Mr. Tailby's, but on reaching this the fog was too thick to admit of it. Hallaton Fallow Close was the next move, and there the atmosphere was clear. This is a stick covert, on the estate of Lord Cardigan, a warm supporter of all things appertaining to foxhunting, as all the world is aware. These are awkward kinds of coverts for hounds to draw, the dead thorns run into them cruelly, and breaking short off are with difficulty extracted. Nevertheless they soon found their fox, and forced him away, pointing for Glooston Wood, which, with the village, they left on the right, Cranhoe on the left, running in a line for Langton Cauldwell up to Welham, leaving that village on the left, where the fox was lost for want

of scent, which was wretched throughout, yet affording an opportunity of admiring the hunting powers of the pack. Conspicuous on most occasions were Abelard and Andover, and an incident occurred during this short chase, beautifully exemplifying the worth of hounds, that are not readily to be driven off the line by over-anxious horsemen. Having checked, the body of hounds hit the scent through a hedge, but were able to carry it only a very short distance, and being somewhat pressed upon they swung round to the right, parallel with the fence, by which time the horsemen were all over the field. Two couples of hounds, of which Andover was one, and Abelard another, with unmistakable truth stuck to the line of their fox, and worked it over the middle of the field, through the horses, affording one of the most interesting displays of real hunting that it is possible to conceive. A visit to Stanton Wood, afforded a third fox, and although the scent, as the day wore on, improved, it was anything but good. Breaking at the upper end of the covert, he pointed for Glooston Wood, but being headed turned to the right, leaving the village on the right, Stanton village on the left, to Church

Langton, where he was marked to ground in Mr. Dain's spinney. Since I was with them I hear they had a capital day from Holt, finding in Stoke end, running to Bisbrook gorse, leaving Seaton on the right, Lyddington on the right, crossing the Uppingham road, leaving Easton on the right, into Rockingham forest—one hour and twenty minutes over a splendid country.

To get a start in this country, the coverts being small, unless "coffee-housing" should occupy the attention, is a matter of no great difficulty, but to keep a lead, having got ever so good a start, is a question of a totally different complexion. The ambition which so many exhibit for this distinction is remarkable and humorous, unless relying on their own and their horses ability they feel sanguine hopes of maintaining their places and sustaining their laurels. Exhibiting wonderful anxiety for a start, and in a few fields losing it, is as undignified a position as any in which ambition can be placed. It is the great rush made for a lead over these flying grass grounds that spoils so many runs. Not giving hounds time to settle to the scent at the critical moment just after a fox has been

viewed away, a check of more or less duration must be the consequence ; and the fox gaining the advantage, unless the scent be better than it is on an average of days, the hounds can seldom get on favourable terms unless their huntsman, by a cast, which must on such occasions be greatly dependant on chance, can render them assistance.

CHAPTER XV.

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND'S HOUNDS AND
COUNTRY.

Most majestically situated on the summit of a hill, Belvoir Castle stands eminently conspicuous as an object of grandeur and magnificence that may be happily associated with the elevated conceptions of a ducal residence. The stately appearance of the edifice, towering above ancient oaks and other timber trees of venerable growth with which the base is surrounded, conveys to the stranger sentiments of its fitness as the residential seat of a distinguished family, and it is discernible from many parts of the country as far distant as the eye can reach. In the midst of a fine estate, consisting of more than twenty manors, the facilities for enjoying the sports of the field are of the highest order. Foxhunting has for ages held

its supremacy, and no country can be better suited to the purpose. The land is generally favourable to scent, and before so much of it was subjected to the plough it was more so than at present. The fences are mostly negotiable, though oftentimes they are of a character to call forth the best energies of horses and riders, without which foxhunting would be divested of its most exciting charms. The coverts are sufficiently extensive for the preservation of foxes, and numerous are those capital gorse coverts for which the counties of Leicester, Lincoln, and the adjacent parts of Nottingham are so essentially famed. Taking Grantham as a centre, and striking a radius of twelve miles, all, or nearly all, the places of meeting are encompassed. Within easy distances of that fine old town are Great Gonerby, Barrowby, Syston Park, Belton Park, Gipple, Cold Harbour, Weaver's Lodge, Ropsley, Somerby, Boothby Hall, Ponton, Harlaxton Hall, Stoke Park, Hungerton Hall, Denton, and Belvoir Castle, from which place Bottesford is the nearest station, and within four miles. Melton Mowbray commands Piper Hole, Goadby Park, Waltham, Stonesby, Saltby, Croxton Park,

Herring's Lodge, Three Queens, Eastwell, Harby, Plungar, and Langar, at the same time they are all within easy access from Grantham. The Great Northern Railway runs nearly through the centre of the country, north and south, with branches to Nottingham and Sleaford. Bottesford station is convenient for Elton, Foston, and Staunton; Hougham station for Hough-on-the-Hill and Dry Doddington; Claypole station for Stutton and Cotham; Ancaster station for Leadenhurst, Fulbeck, Caythorpe, Bayard's Leap, Broadwater, Culverthorpe, Aswarby Park, Cranwell, North Rauceby, and Barkston; Sleaford station for the north-eastern extremities, which include Kirkby Laythorpe and Haverholme Priory; Corby station affords opportunities for reaching Irnham House, Burton Cogles, Bitchfield, Lenton Village, Kelsby, Aslackby, Kirkby Underwood, Dunsby Wood, Colsterworth, and Easton Park, which are on the confines of the Cottesmore Hunt, and these neighbouring packs frequently interchange cordialities by running their foxes into each other's country, an event which, when terminating with blood, invariably arouses feelings of unbounded satisfaction to

the visitors. There is some very nice grass country in this district, but bearing northward, the eastern boundary consists of fens, where horses cannot follow. On the north, Lord Henry Bentinck exercises the prerogative of hunting, and from Grantham to Caythorpe the fences are light, and so is the land, and is not, therefore, except in wet weather, favourable to scent; but when that important element does serve, hounds can race over this country at a terrific pace, bringing horses to grief, as soon, or possibly sooner, than where the fences are of greater magnitude. North of Caythorpe, the country becomes stronger, with more grass, though, unfortunately, there are fewer foxes than in other parts. The western confines are good, and the vale of Belvoir enjoys a wide-spread fame, but the improvements of modern farming, as in almost all other places, have contributed materially to alter the hunting aptitudes of the country. Draining, for example, by increasing the powers of evaporation, has had a great effect; and artificial manures are very generally condemned as antagonistic agents, an impression, however, with which I am not quite prepared to

concur. The now common practice of ploughing up the stubbles immediately after harvest is one of the most prejudicial operations, but as it is so conducive to the interests of the farmers we must gracefully accept the custom without a murmur. On the other hand, as arable cultivation has increased, so has the keeping of cattle in the yards; and sheep are the sole occupants of the open fields; they, too, are mostly folded, by which means the impediments they present when roving at large are materially diminished.

There is much difficulty in arriving at any precise data by which it can be determined when foxhounds were first introduced to the Belvoir kennels. It has been asserted that they have been established over one hundred and thirty years, but I am unable to find any authority to confirm that inference. The earliest date of entries supplied by the manuscript lists at the kennel commences with 1756. That they were established previously to that year there can be no doubt, as the list to which I refer relates to the entry of young hounds, one of which owed his paternity to Mr. Noel's Victor. That gentleman must have been master of the pack then

hunting the Cottesmore country. It would be very interesting to determine at what period, and by whom, the first pack of hounds was used exclusively for the purpose of hunting foxes, but that point, I fear, cannot now be determined. It is recorded in history that James I., on his journey from Scotland, beguiled his time with hunting, and that from Newark he passed on to Belvoir Castle. Live hares were liberated ; and, if history be correct, hounds in those early days were encouraged to hunt drag scents ; but no mention is then made of the legitimate chase of the fox. The poetical effusions of Somerville bear testimony that foxhunting had become an established pastime ere he wrote his beautiful poem, "The Chase," and as he died in 1742, at fifty years of age, we have conclusive evidence of the sport having been previously adopted. Passing over the periods when wild boars and wolves had been hunted down and exterminated from our woods and forests, the stag and the hare were for a time the selected beasts of venery, when it is apparent there was a transition, so to speak, to the chase of the fox. When hounds were cheered on to either fox, stag, or hare,

whichever they might find, that renders it so difficult, nay, impossible, to define the data when they were made steady to their game. Somerville gives confirmation of this in his remark—

“A diff’rent hound for ev’ry diff’rent chase
Select with judgment.”

He could not have expressed himself so eloquently and classically as he did on many essential points had he not been well up in the “noble science.”

Highly amusing are the imaginations of naturalists that the primitive variety of the canine tribe bore the character of sheep dogs; and then, again, to what description of sheep dog did they set their affections, for they are as widely different as two animals of the same species well can be? There is the Scotch collie dog, with smooth coat, sharp nose, erect ears, and bushy tail, barely more than fifteen or sixteen inches high, to be compared with the breed more commonly used in England, measuring five or six and twenty inches in height, with curly coat, prehensile ears, and a bob tail, and I shall be glad to be enlightened as to which variety of these two is the honour

due of being the primogenitor of the fox-hound. I think all masters of hounds and huntsmen of the present day will agree with me that such an assumption is a poetical phantasy. Nevertheless, there must have been some animal of the canine race to commence the order with, and it is quite as reasonable to apply the characteristic of the bloodhound or the mastiff, and, indeed, very much more so than to anything bearing resemblance to the sheep dog of modern days. Marvellous as it appears that the gigantic mastiff should be of the same species as the diminutive terrier, yet so it is; and this proclaims most unequivocally to what an extraordinary degree the canine race is regulated by treatment and climate when under the influences of domestication. This property of subserviency to certain causes exemplifies moreover to what a vast extent the perfection of foxhounds may be promoted, by judiciously selecting parents gifted with valuable properties and qualifications. Without presuming to establish my argument as a fact, I think it highly probable that the error into which naturalists have been led, as regards the distinction of primogeniture being derived from the sheep dog, most probably arose from

the use of dogs when they were first domesticated, in collecting and driving their sheep, without reference to any peculiar characteristics, or in any degree identifying a particular variety.

The learned Doctor Johnson tells us that the dogs used by the ancients did not pursue their game by scent; in this he might have been mistaken, for there is every reason to suppose that they possessed some kind of dogs which did, and that they used others similar in their instincts to greyhounds. The forests, thickets, and rough woodlands in which the ancients were accustomed to enjoy their pastime, would not have afforded them sport without the assistance of nose. On another occasion I have quoted a short extract from a work written by Edward of Langley, some five centuries ago, and it is very evident from the remarks he introduces that in those days they had certain hounds "that shall be finders," and others that "shall come to the views;" furthermore, he thus describes the soul-inspiring scene, when the stag comes bounding from the copse. "And then he shall see the hart pass before him, and he shall halloo and rout mightily; and he shall see

which hounds come in the van chase, and in the middle chase, and which be skirters." Nothing can more clearly prove the customs of those times.

There is every probability when hounds were first kept at Belvoir that the stag was their game, indeed, there is evidence of this in an ancient picture representing the chase of that animal; and taking the date from the kennel book, of which I was favoured with a perusal, and in which, as already mentioned, the first entry of young hounds was made in the year 1756, under the impression that they had been rendered steady to fox a few years previously, I believe it will not be very far from the actual date if assigned to a few years prior to 1750. In further confirmation of this, in the Brocklesby kennel book there is an entry of four couples of puppies in 1750, by Lord Granby's Dexter, son of Mr. Noel's Victor, evidently a celebrity of his day, and it is reasonable to suppose that Dexter's services would not have been sought for had he not proved himself worthy of distinction by three or four seasons' probation in the Belvoir kennels. Thus the pack would be established by John, third Duke of Rutland, whose life,

by the invigorating effects of the chase, was prolonged to the patriarchal age of 83; but his successor died young, and left his son a minor, during which period a committee was appointed to conduct the hunting arrangements till his Grace came of age. In the year 1831, the mastership was undertaken by Lord Forester, a nobleman whose ancestors had so greatly distinguished themselves as to render all the highest attributes of the chase inheritances. The late Lord Forester, one of the finest horsemen that ever crossed Leicestershire, imparted the same excellencies to his son, and the superlative judgment of Squire Forester, of Willey, in all matters relative to hounds and hunting, was another of the family qualities which his lordship cultivated by that most important mentor, experience. Under his lordship's able management for more than a quarter of a century, the Belvoir pack has been brought to its very high state of perfection. No hound not quite true in symmetry would he ever permit to be entered, and then, unless they were good in their work, they were speedily drafted. On the Duke of Rutland coming to the title in 1857, Lord Forester resigned the trust to his Grace, who,

it is to be hoped, will speedily recover from the accident which has so painfully deprived him of the enjoyment of a pursuit he affects with such liberality and enthusiasm.

To the prejudicial influence of repeated changes of masters and huntsmen, to which so many packs have been doomed, these are most happily exempted. In the year 1791, till April, 1805, they were hunted by Newman. Shaw then succeeded, and continued in office till 1816. The ever celebrated Goosey entered the service of the late Duke of Rutland as whipper-in, in 1794, and turned the hounds to Shaw till he resigned, when Goosey's promotion took place, and he continued as huntsman till 1842. Thus he was on duty in the Belvoir establishment—wanting only two seasons—the unprecedented term of half a century. He died on the 8th of August, 1847. To his exquisite judgment of the requisites and of the properties necessary to be observed in the breeding of hounds, most judiciously assisted during the latter portion of the time by Lord Forester, the Belvoir pack has progressively attained the very great perfection for which the banners of fame are so extensively unfurled. After

such a long service, when age and those unfortunate infirmities which flesh is heir to rendered his retirement imperative, he was succeeded by William Goodall, who had acted as his whipper-in five seasons, and he continued as huntsman till he was called to that state “from which no traveller returns,” in 1859. His last hours were kindly solaced by frequent visits from the Duke of Rutland, who generously added graceful soothments to his departing spirit, by assuring him that his family should be provided for, a promise which has been most liberally carried into effect. James Cooper, who though born in Scotland is of English parentage, commenced his studies of the venatic art with a pack of harriers kept by Mr. Urquhart at Mildrum, in Aberdeenshire. To steady him from hare, he had five seasons’ tuition under merry John Walker with the Fife, after which an engagement with the Burton and another with the Brocklesby introduced him into the truly sporting county of Lincoln, when he came to Belvoir as first whip to Goodall, at whose death he was appointed huntsman. With the precepts of such talented professors he has had every opportunity of becoming a

master of the art, and most successfully has he adopted their principles. A very light weight and a fine horseman, he is able to live with his hounds at the terrific pace they are so frequently accustomed to skim over this flying country.

Referring to the old lists of the Belvoir Hounds, I found that the kennels to which they resorted for fresh infusions of blood were in days of yore Mr. Pelham's (the Brocklesby), Mr. Noel's, Lord Monson's (which were distinguished among other perfections of their time for their rich black and tan colour), and Mr. Meynell's. When Mr. Heron resigned the Cheshire country, the late Duke of Rutland introduced that gentleman's pack to the Belvoir kennels, and they consisted principally of the Quorn descendants. Subsequently, Lord Lonsdale's and Mr. Osbaldeston's kennels were searched for celebrities, also Sir Tatton Sykes's, Sir Richard Sutton's, Mr. Foljambe's, the late and the present Mr. Drake's, the Duke of Beaufort's, and, occasionally, Lord Fitzwilliam's.

By the acknowledged principle of etiquette, "*seniores priores*," Rallywood, now eleven

years old, is entitled to precedence, but he has numerous other and stronger claims to the pride of place. When in the vigour of youth no competitor could outpace him or show more determination in chase, and, with an afternoon fox, when the powers of nature were failing in other hounds, his endurance and courage were alike undaunted. There is yet another plaudit, and a still more lasting one, for the good old hound ; he is the progenitor of a very numerous family, doing great honour to their parentage. His colour is a very rich black, white, and tan ; his symmetry is most captivating and perfect. With a splendid, intelligent head, well set on, a nice clean neck, good shoulders, legs straight as arrows, rare feet, fine back and loins, with capital thighs, rather under than over twenty-three inches in height, he is, in my estimation, as near as possible the perfection of a foxhound. Lord Yarborough's Rallywood is his sire, and Sprightly his dam. Poor Will Goodall's memorandum is graphically descriptive of Lord Yarborough's Rallywood : — “ This is a most beautiful little short-legged dog, exceedingly light of bone, but with beautiful legs and feet. I got him in

exchange for Ragland in 1850. This dog was considered by the late William Smith to be one of the best bred hounds in the Brocklesby kennels. Rosebud, his dam, worked up until she was ten years old; she was never known to do anything wrong; they are perfection in their work, and everlasting."

The produce of Rallywood I will proceed with in due order after having introduced the paternal representatives of the Belvoir kennels. Singer, in his eighth season, a son of Comus and Syren, is a rich black, white, and tan, of true proportions, with great thighs and bone, and has rather a numerous family. His sire, Comus, is a son of Champion and Barmaid, and Syren is a daughter of Mr. Drake's Duster and Sprightly; thus in the maternal line he goes back to the same family as Rallywood. Challenger, in his seventh season, is by Chaser (a son of Lord Yarborough's Rallywood and Caroline) and Destiny (daughter of Mr. Drake's Duster). He is quite a foxhound, with great power, but his colour (a lightish hare pie) is not quite in conformity with the beautiful black and tan which prevails in these kennels. Nimrod is one of the Belvoir colour, descended from

Guider and Novelty, Guider being a son of Mr. Drake's Duster and Gamesome. Chanticlear is a son of Chaser and Needless, therefore of the same paternity as Challenger, but a year his junior, and the same age as Nimrod. Alfred, entered the following season, is on rather a larger scale and of value, when an increase of size is sought for. His sire Trusty represents Mr. Foljambe's kennel, being a son of his Forester and the Belvoir Trinket. Nightshade, the dam of Alfred, is a daughter of Nigel and Blameless. Cruiser is by Mr. Foljambe's Duster and Charmer, a daughter of Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest. Limner, a fine lengthy hound on short legs, is a son of Comus and Ladyblush. Stormer, son of Guider and Stately. Striver, a particularly clever hound, is by Trusty out of Sanguine. Comrade, a charming coloured hound, with fine symmetry, is descended from Comus and Ransome, and possesses all the fine characteristics of the kennel; he is in his fourth season. Of the same entry are Render and Roman, two splendid sons of Rallywood and Destitute, a daughter of Sir Richard Sutton's Dryden; in these two brothers the beautiful type of the Belvoir

blood is exemplified in its utmost perfection, and the description already given of Rallywood has only to be repeated ; Render's shoulders are quite a study. Destitute, the dam of these hounds, was entered in 1854, and is still able to do her part in accounting for her fox, a rare proof of constitution ; her dam, Tuneful, was a daughter of Trouncer and Skilful, by Mr. Foljambe's Stormer and Fortune ; Stormer by his Rattler and Spinster, a daughter of the Brocklesby Chaser and Scandal. With so much fresh blood, the characteristics are still preserved to an eminent degree. Rasselas and Raglan are two clever sons of Rallywood, the latter remarkably elegant ; Nightshade, their mother, has been already introduced as the dam of Alfred ; a characteristic description of them would be only a repetition of what has already been given of their sires' perfections. In their third season are Nathan and Nelson, both hounds of great style and symmetry, sons of Fairplay and Nosegay ; the latter has possibly the best shoulders, but both of them are, in every respect, very perfect in symmetry. With Wrangler I close the list of stallion hounds ; he is a son of Lifter and Wisdom, and is de-

scended through his sire from Mr. Drake's Lucifer. To describe minutely every hound in a kennel consisting of sixty-seven couples of hounds would occupy much space, and might be condemned as a tiresome proceeding; in fact, so wonderfully suity is the pack that the description of one hound suffices for them all. They are of nice height, none exceeding twenty-three inches, remarkable for true proportions, excellent shoulders, good thighs, with unexceptionable legs and feet.

However, I cannot deny myself the pleasure of introducing the family of the Rallywoods, of which there are fourteen couples and a half. Willing and Waspish, out of Destiny, are in their fifth season. Rosey and Ringlet, two most captivating daughters of Dowager, sister to Destitute, display great size, power, and quality rarely found in the sex. Render and Roman have been already duly honoured. I have now to add their sister Royalty. The six sisters of Rasselias and Raglan claim distinction: Rosamond, Ruthful, Rapture, Reckless, Riot, and Ransome—they are included in the fourth season's entry. In the year following are Clasper, Dainty, Destiny, Finder, Nectar, Nimble, Nancy, and Rover; then

come Dimity, Delicate, and Drayman. Last year's entry consists of Byron, Norman and Nigel; the last two sons of Nightshade, the dam of Raglan, and evincing exquisite quality, with all the high characteristics of the family. Norman has already greatly distinguished himself in his work.

There is no place better calculated in every respect to meet these hounds than at the Three Queens. The proximity to Melton ensures the attendance of a large portion of the aristocratic coterie who affect that highly favoured region. Then there is a magnetic attraction for another class, whose utmost ambition consists in over-riding hounds; for in this country, unless on one of those exceptional days when there is good scent, they have frequent opportunities of enjoying their fun. The land is light, and the fences of a character not calculated to impede progress. These very aspiring gentlemen are nevertheless sometimes disappointed in their pleasures, and it would be hard indeed if they were not, seeing how frequently they cause disappointment to those who go out with the legitimate hope of enjoying a run, and of taking the country as it comes, rough or smooth. Thus

there is a fine opportunity of witnessing the “malice prepense” which prevails to spoil sport, by defeating the operations of the pack, and frustrating the efforts of the huntsman. But I will proceed to explain how a gallant fox and a good scent upset their machinations. A trot of some three miles or more to Sproxton Thorns served to take away the stiffness of aged hunters and relieve the pipes of the plethoric. The hounds soon found, and, after a little coquetting, a fine fox presented himself in the open. On the left there is a lane, which was thronged with spirits ambitious for a start, and a large portion of the field, equally anxious, occupied the country on the right. Before a hound was out of covert, halloos in both directions increased the confusion; a brace of foxes, as it eventually appeared, were on foot, one of which gallantly faced the throng of horsemen in the lane. The other, with equal determination, threaded his way through the horses on the right, and the hounds dividing were working as best they could in both directions. Which way to steer was a matter of uncertainty, but seeing Cooper, and hearing his horn on the left, cleared up the doubt with

me. He succeeded in getting some of the hounds, and they settled to their work in a manner that none will do unless accustomed to such difficulties. They were not long in reaching Bescoby Oakes, but there were only nine couples. On entering that covert they inclined to the left, and away straight as possible for Croxton Park. As I passed through the gate on to the classic turf, reminiscences of Billesdon Coplows came across me, but the speed of Bellissima would have failed to outpace the pack. How charming it is to see the efforts of the overriding crew defeated. Like pigeons the hounds flew over the hill—they had never been interrupted; the pace from the commencement had been too good for that. Down the vale to Branstone they rushed, where the fox, being headed, turned on the right, which occasioned a check. Time thirty minutes, distance over six miles. Recovering the line, the hounds hunted their fox magnificently to the nursery at Knipton, where the fox was viewed, but, closely pressed, he quitted his quarters, and soon after found an asylum in a bank near Allen's Wood. Here they were joined by the remainder of the pack

and the portion of the field which had followed them. A second fox was at home in Tipping's Gorse; he went away to Hungerton Gorse, but a great portion of the field riding to the first couple of hounds that got away brought them to a check, and he was given up.

They had a good day when they met at Waltham, but, as I was not present, I can only describe it as it has been related to me. The hounds found at Croxton Banks. Away, leavingarlston Pasture to the right, straight through Allen's Wood, leaving Tipping's Gorse on the right, through Stoke Pasture, and pointing for Stoke Park; the fox was headed, and turned to the left through Wyville Plantation, leaving School Plats Gorse on the right; on for Winmere-hill Gorse, from thence to Hungerton, where the hounds ran into him in fifty-five minutes. On the following day from Great Ponton, they found in Stoke Park Wood; hunted their fox to Stoke Park, where they lost him. Found again in Boothby Great Wood, and went away very fast, leaving Bassingthorpe on the left, Burton Coggles on the left, and Burton High Wood on the right; on through Sway-

field Wood and Tortoiseshell Wood, to Mockery Wood, where he was lost.

On the 7th of February these hounds met at Great Gonerby, a day that will long be remembered with deep regret in consequence of the sad fall the Duke of Rutland met with, and which has so unhappily deprived his Grace of the pleasure of hunting, it is to be feared, for some time to come. A fox was found in Gonerby Moors, and the hounds hunted him with admirable truth and patience an extensive ring, skirting Syston and Belton Parks, back to the covert in which he was found. They then drew Casthorpe Hills, and a fox broke covert at the bottom, but turned to the left for Gonerby, racing over the grass fields at a great pace. It was there that his Grace, riding his horse at a high and stiff cut fence, met with the accident. The horse, not clearing it, threw the Duke very heavily, and Mr. Blackwood and others who saw it, and went to his assistance, felt painful alarm of the consequences. A conveyance was procured with all possible despatch, and his Grace was taken to the George, at Grantham. The hounds, on reaching Peascliff, were stopped. It is scarcely possible to express

the deep sympathy and regret the unhappy event occasioned among all classes in the neighbourhood where the noble Duke's virtues, kind courtesies, and acts of liberality are so well known and so highly appreciated. A memorial had been prepared by 600 farmers and others, residing in the hunt, to express their gratitude to his Grace for his many acts of kindness, to thank him for hunting the country, and condole with him for the annoyance he had received from a violent vulpecide who had shot a fox the hounds were running. This was to have been presented a few days after the accident occurred, but was of necessity deferred to a future opportunity.

The run of the season took place after this : it was from Stubton on Feb. 10. They found in the old gorse, and away for Stragglethorpe, but, turning to the right, the fox crossed and recrossed the Brank several times, leaving Brandon Village on the right, Hough Gorse close to the right, and the village to the left. He then went as straight as a crow could fly for the main earths at Normanton Hill, which, fortunately, were stopped. Leaving Sparrow Gorse on the left, and Rauceby High Wood on the right, he went through North

Rauceby Village, across Rauceby Park, leaving Bullywells on the left, to Quarrington Village, threaded several gardens, and on for Sleaford station, crossed the railway and the river, and running from scent to view, the hounds pulled him down in Sleaford Carrs. Time, one hour fifty minutes.

THE DUKE OF RUTLAND'S HOUNDS—THE
YOUNG ENTRY FOR 1863.

There are few occupations more pleasing during the intervals between the hunting seasons than a day's inspection of the young hounds destined to fill the openings in the ranks which departed favourites have vacated. The good old hound that has so often gallantly led the van cannot be missed without regret, and then out of regard to his good deeds and his memory we are curious to inquire the character of the progeny in whom we hope to find all his good qualities inherent. To those noblemen and gentlemen of wealth, whose hunting establishments have been maintained as heirlooms for very many generations, the unbounded thanks of sportsmen are emphatically due for the liberal spirit and vast talent displayed in breeding foxhounds. It must be

conceded that very marked improvements are visible in many provincial packs, yet those improvements are principally to be attributed to the infusions they have procured from the fashionable kennels, where a long series of time has permitted those types of excellence to be cultivated which are indispensable to the perpetuation of similar perfections.

There may be diversities of opinions, or rather of tastes, concerning size or colour, but there can be but one standard as regards beauty of outline, and the very important formations of shoulders, backs, loins, thighs, legs, and feet. That hounds of the present day have acquired those perfections of symmetry with a sacrifice of hunting accomplishments is an argument in which I am by no means prepared to acquiesce. That any person can offer an acceptable reason why a great, coarse, plain hound should possess olfactory powers of a higher order, greater industry and endurance, or that most indispensable property of turning on the line, and, moreover, those beautiful instincts commonly denominated sense,—than a hound of finer proportion, elegance, and fashion, is to me a most inexplicable problem. The science of physiognomy

is an essential study for masters of hounds and huntsmen to enable them to breed hounds successfully, and having bred them to form their entries. There are unmistakable expressions of countenance which indisputably denote intellect, and there are, too, associations of forms corporal, which in connection with the features of the head and face, operate, so to speak, in unison, to render a foxhound capable of transmitting his good properties to his descendants. The happy combinations do not exist in a coarse, vulgar hound any more than they do in the roughest specimens of the human race. The invaluable perfection of nose, as it is termed, I take it consists in exquisite sensibility of the olfactory system, with a quickness of perception to carry that power into effect, for without the last-named property a foxhound is of very little value. A hound may be gifted with very low scenting powers without possessing energy to drive and make the best use of his time. When good qualities have been cultivated through many generations, the animal enjoying them is the more to be relied upon as being most likely to transmit them.

The original entry was composed of eighteen

couples and a half, of which Render is the sire of three and a half couples, Singer of three couples, Lord Yarborough's Nathan of two and a half couples, Druid and Challenger each one couple and a half, Chanticleer, Lord Middleton's Corporal, Lictor, and the North Warwickshire Nimrod each one couple; Rufus, Lady Forester's Raglan, Grappler, Hermit, and Nimrod, one hound each. Render, it may be remembered, was mentioned in very high terms by me last winter; a son of Rallywood and Destitute, he is evidently destined to transmit the good qualities of his ancestors. This, the first year of his progeny being introduced, will establish his fame. Rosebud, a beautiful daughter of his and Redcap's, has a great frame and all the attractive attributes of her sex, and her brother Royal is a fine promising hound. Gaylass and Guilty, daughters of Graceful, have great power, especially the former, and the latter is remarkable for her beauty. Gamester, their brother, is a hound of good size, and very useful. The Singers, as a family, possess the fine character which distinguishes the hounds appertaining to the Belvoir kennels, while there is a strain on the

side of his dam from Mr. Drake's Duster. The Nathans have lots of power—Nightshade especially ; her thighs are muscular and good. Rattler, a son of Rufus, if possible, excels the kennel average of legs and feet, for they are quite a study. Glory is a very handsome descendant of Raglan. Harpy, a clever daughter of Lord Middleton's Corporal, owes her recovery from a most severe attack of distemper to Mr. Hunt's invaluable powders. Seaman, a son of the North Warwickshire Nimrod, excels his father in symmetrical proportions, particularly so about his neck and shoulders ; although a prize was awarded to him at the Birmingham Exhibition, and useful as he is, he never ranked so highly in my estimation as to select him as a sire.

The coverts in the Belvoir country having corn-fields to interfere with cub-hunting, that necessary preliminary is subservient to the harvest. Operations, therefore, did not commence till the 28th of August, on which day the Belvoir woods were visited, and after running two hours and twenty minutes, with a moderate scent, the young hounds drew their first blood.

The accounts of the Duke of Rutland's

health, unhappily, do not give much promise of his hunting next winter, his Grace's medical advisers having entered a protest against it. It is to be hoped, however, that they may be mistaken, and that the Duke will more quickly regain his strength than they anticipate. The absence from the hunting-field of a nobleman who so liberally supports foxhunting, and who evidently takes so much pleasure in the chase as the Duke of Rutland does, will be a source of universal sympathy and regret.

CHAPTER XVI.

THE WARWICKSHIRE COUNTRY AND HOUNDS.

The first master of foxhounds in Warwickshire, of whom there is any authentic information, was the ever-celebrated Mr. John Warde, who undertook the arduous responsibilities at a very early period of life. This gentleman was removed from the cares of this world in 1838, at the patriarchal age of 86, having disposed of his last pack to Mr. William Horlock, in 1826, for the large sum of 2,000 guineas, and it is reported that he kept hounds, hunting divers countries, the unprecedented term of 56 years. His hounds were of gigantic stature, much celebrated for their hunting properties, and their blood is dispersed through several kennels of the present day, where it may be pretty generally distinguished by certain indications of coarseness, requiring many generations to intervene ere

the refinements of structure, so essential to perfection are established. It appears that Mr. Warde was hunting the Bicester country, in conjunction with adjacent parts of Warwickshire, in 1790, and had done so for several years previously, and in all probability, too, for a season or two afterwards, as Mr. Corbet, his successor, hunted the country about twenty years, and the date of his resignation is well known to have occurred in 1812. The pleasing precedents so happily established by Mr. Meynell in the neighbouring county were successfully adopted by Mr. Corbet, and a hunt club on a very extensive scale was established, the classical town of Stratford-on-Avon being selected as head-quarters, where the kennels also were constructed. Mr. Corbet, however, had gained great celebrity as a master of hounds, prior to his entering upon Warwickshire, in his own native county, Shropshire, and also around Shenstone in the neighbourhood of Lichfield. It was in the latter country that he formed his pack, which subsequently gained such wonderful fame, principally from the excellence of a single hound called Trojan, whose history is remarkable. Mr. Corbet was the purchaser of some

harriers at Tattersall's, including a bitch called Tidings, of whose ancestors there was no record. Her great superiority and good looks, characteristic of foxhound parentage, caused her a visit to the Pytchley kennels, and Trueboy was permitted to court her favours, when she produced a hound which was named Trojan. His accomplishments were highly eulogised, especially a feat he performed of leaping the park wall at Chillington while leading the pack in chase of a fox found in the park, which, having run a ring, returned. None of the pack could follow him over the wall, and, alone in his glory, he marked his fox into a drain. On another occasion he distinguished himself in a similar manner by clearing the park wall at Sandwell, the seat of Lord Dartmouth. Having thus obtained a high reputation, he became the favourite and principal progenitor of the pack which Mr. Corbet introduced into Warwickshire. Hunted by Will Barrow, a man of acknowledged talent, under the courteous influences of Mr. Corbet, Warwickshire attained renown scarcely second to that of Leicestershire. Riding to hounds became an accomplishment of envy and admiration. The

two brothers, Mr. Francis and Mr. Robert Canning, shone as the champions of welter weights; and the late Mr. Hawkes was one of the first to exemplify the superiority of thorough-bred horses in the hunting-field if ridden with that refined skill for which he was so justly famed. Mr. Corbet resigning in 1812 the hounds were sold to the late Lord Middleton, who kept them ten seasons, having for his huntsman the celebrated John Wood. A severe fall from his horse compelled his lordship to forego the delights of foxhunting but, in the hope of recovering, he lent his hounds to Sir Tatton Sykes; thus this country, which had hitherto been hunted without any subscription, had to find both the needful and a fresh pack of hounds. This difficulty was overcome by Mr. Shirley, of Eatington Hall, who undertook the management of the country till some other gentleman would come forward to relieve him from the responsibilities. At the termination of the second season, Mr. Hay, of Dunse Castle, in Scotland, who had been keeping hounds in the Woore country, took the duties off Mr. Shirley's hands, hunting them himself, with William Boxall as first whip. This gentleman's

was a triennial occupation, when Mr. Newton Fellowes succeeded him, on which occasion a pack of hounds was formed, whose descendants have remained in the country to the present period. Boxall was appointed huntsman by Mr. Fellowes, and continued in that office through the mastership of Mr. Russell, and during a part of the time that Mr. Thornhill kept the hounds, when the horn was handed to Tom Day, of whom it was most gratifying to read in *Bell's Life* the kind, well-merited remarks of his quondam master, the ever-celebrated "Squire of Quorn." Mr. Thornhill resigned in favour of Mr. Granville, and it is curious to relate that of the five masters in succession each of them held the country for three years. The late greatly-esteemed Lord Willoughby de Broke, then Mr. Barnard, took to the establishment, and afforded a vast amount of sport during his seventeen years' occupation. In 1856, his lordship gave up in favour of Mr. Lucy, whose time was brief, however brilliant his establishment, when in turn he resigned to Mr. Henley Greaves, whose career was signalised by an unfortunate paucity of sport. Coming to the rescue, Lord Willoughby resumed in 1861, in conjunction with the Hon.

W. H. J. North, the present master. Lord Willoughby's unexpected and much-lamented death, in June, 1862, left Mr. North at the head of affairs. Great and glorious as the antecedents have been in this truly sporting county, they have never presented more cheering aspects than those which loom in the future. Zealously devoted to foxhunting, Mr. North enters upon the duties of a master of foxhounds *con amore*, with a determination to become thoroughly conversant with the details over which he is destined to preside. Studying profoundly the pedigrees of hounds, he sedulously devotes himself to the cabalistic art of breeding them, with a resolute determination to embrace every opportunity of improvement; and the very great advancement that has already taken place affords pleasing anticipations of what will follow. There is yet more to be added to this: Mrs. North, the respected wife of the master of the hounds, with all the amabilities which are so graceful in the fair ladies of England, is as anxious for the success of the pack as her liege lord can possibly be; and when such felicitous associations take place, there is the greater confidence that the highly popular master's presidency will be lasting.

Many are the monuments erected to the honour of living and departed worth, but there are very few which speak more eloquently in behalf of foxhunting than one which adorns the county of Warwick; and that, curiously enough, conveys an unusual character, for it is an erection commemorative of the generous feelings actuating those who materially assisted in its construction without a particle of egotistic pretensions, the meritorious act emanating entirely from the good purpose the edifice was intended to possess. This refers to the stables and kennels erected at Kineton. In the year 1839, when Mr. Barnard assumed the mastership, they were built on land, the gift of Mr. George Lucy, of Charlecote Park, and the design was made by his brother-in-law, Mr. Hugh Williams, without the assistance of any professional architect. The buildings consist of two houses, one for the huntsman and the other for the stud-groom; sleeping-rooms over the stables for the helpers, and a mess-room for their accommodation. There are ten loose boxes, three three-stall stables, and a bail stable capable of being converted into loose boxes. The kennels consist of three principal lodgings-

rooms, and two smaller ones, with all the necessary appurtenances of feeding-room, boiling-house, flesh-house, &c. The funds for the construction of these buildings were supplied by the members of the Warwickshire Hunt. The materials were drawn to the spot by the united efforts of 180 farmers, who collectively had at work 553 waggons. The first stone was laid on July 24, and, on October 15, the various apartments were occupied ; hounds, horses, and servants were in their respective quarters. It is doubtful if greater expedition in the construction of buildings was ever practised on any other occasion. What can be more conclusive of the good feeling which the Warwickshire farmers entertain for foxhunting than that they would come forward as they did gratuitously at a time, be it remembered, when they were also engaged with their corn harvest ?

Mr. North's good intentions are steadily and ably carried out by his huntsman, Tom Matthews, by birth a Salopian, descended from a family well known in that county for their sporting and equestrian propensities. Entered to hounds by that prime sportsman,

the late Sir E. Smythe, of Acton Burnell, as the Shropshire Hounds changed masters he was in the employ of Mr. Smythe Owen, Lord Hill, and Mr. T. C. Eyton. He was also at one period with the Worcestershire, and with the Cottesmore; in Ireland some ten or twelve seasons, and came to hunt these hounds in 1860.

It is only by carefully investigating the properties, qualifications, propensities, and constitutions of predecessors that success can reasonably be expected to follow the arduous undertaking of breeding a pack of hounds, and these are details which Mr. North and his huntsman very sedulously regard; indeed, it is very seldom that I have met with any one more thoroughly conversant with the pedigrees of hounds than Matthews. The ancestors of the present pack were got together by Mr. Newton Fellowes, as already mentioned, upwards of thirty years ago, but that gentleman's successor, Mr. Russell, only hunting three days in the week, reduced their numbers, which were again restored by Mr. Thornhill, principally from Lord Lonsdale's kennels, which stood in high repute for large hounds. The favourite blood of Tarquin and Saffron has

been widely dispersed in many packs of fame.

The present list contains the names of fifty-four couples of hounds, whereof sixteen couples are of this year's entry, and they are divided into two packs, the large and the small. The nomenclature is headed by a respectable old matron, Beatrice, who, although in her eighth season, can take her turn and run up; she is the dam of a couple of useful young hounds, Bedford and Benedick, the former with abundance of bone to recommend him. Promise, a year younger, a nicely-shaped daughter of the Duke of Beaufort's Prodigal, has a worthy son in Priam, by the Belvoir Gamester. The next is Comfort, descended from Lord Fitzhardinge's Challenger and Tidings. Going back to the Duke of Grafton's sort, she transmits the good blood of the Berkeley kennels to Remnant, by Sir Watkin Wynn's Royal; this was one of the candidates for honours at the recent hound show at Birmingham, and it is inexplicable to me why she did not take with the judges in preference to Lapwing. Comfort had also another litter by Wellington—Crazy, Comely, Countess, and Cautious,

very useful, the former possessing great bone and size, sufficient to enlist her services in the large pack. Bluecap and Brilliant, five season hunters, have good looks to recommend them, and Daphne is particularly clever. The same year's entry includes two couples by Saffron, of which Songstress and Singwell demand a high commendation, and on True-love a man must be fastidious if he cannot settle his affections. Blucher, a fine slashing hound, and his two sisters, Barmaid and Bluebell, again represent the Saffron family. Blightsome, a daughter of Bellman and Trinket, has wonderful power for her sex. There is another couple and a half of the Saffrons in this, the fourth season's, entry. Banker, Bouncer, and Bondsman are introductions of blood from the Badminton kennels, through the Duke of Beaufort's Banker. Hasty, Harriet, and Heedless are three remarkably clever descendants of Lord Fitzwilliam's Hotspur and the Warwickshire Hopeful; Lapwing found favour with the judges at the late Birmingham exhibition; she has plenty of bone, is a good dark black and white, with a little tan, and is a daughter of Sir Richard Sutton's Trojan and Lavender,

by Lord Fitzhardinge's Lincoln out of Heedless ; Heedless, by Rallywood out of Harlot, by Mr. Assheton Smith's Admiral and his Heedless. A very gay-looking hare-pied hound, Warrior, is a son of Sir Watkin Wynn's Warrior and Hyacinth. The two-season hunters include Lexicon, the winner of the Birmingham cup for dogs. He is a great, commanding-looking hound of a good rich colour, more striking as a fine hound than for his beauty. The Duke of Rutland's Lexicon is his sire, the Warwickshire Winifred his dam ; Lexicon by Mr. Drake's Lucifer ; Winifred, by Saffron out of Woodbine, a daughter of Lord Fitzhardinge's Bardolph and the Warwickshire Willing. It is truly astonishing, in tracing pedigrees of hounds, to find the Berkeley blood so widely dispersed, and conspicuous where great superiority exists. Besides those already introduced there are many very nice young hounds in this year's entry, especially Ajax and Alfred, Lightning and Lavender, Sorcerer, Sanguine, Stately, and Scandal.

It should be understood that, with the exception of two couples left by Mr. Greaves when he resigned, but bred by him previously

to his coming here, and one couple and a half of the lot purchased at the sale of the North Warwickshire in May last, all the other hounds were bred at these kennels. The North Warwickshire consists of Marksman, Nimrod, and Dreadnought. Nimrod secured for his respected master the Birmingham trophy of 1861. He has plenty of power and size, and is a rare bred one, by Hannibal, a hound entered by Mr. Baker, son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest and the Berkeley Heroine. Dashaway was included in this lot, but Mr. North drafted him in favour of his brother-in-law, Lord Eglington, who is strong in the old black-and-tan blood, which gained so much celebrity during Mr. Baker's mastership of North Warwickshire.

A great treat, indeed, is a visit of inspection in the stables, which contain ten horses ridden by Mr. North, an equal number by the huntsman, and there are nine for the use of the two whippers-in. Deerfoot, Corporal, Ballinasloe, a remarkably nice bay horse; Christmas, a black horse; Brown Duchess and Harlequin are Mr. North's; Empress, Chief Justice, Kathleen, Khol-

Rabbi, Comrade and Industrious, the huntsman's. Their condition, under Boram's watchful eye, is superlatively good. I never saw an equal number of horses looking so level and fit to go.

The country being extensive, a van^{is} a necessary part of the establishment; and this is constructed upon a most excellent plan, at a moderate cost, designed by Matthews and executed by Mr. William Perkins, a provincial artist at Alcester. The body is quite low, so that the hounds can walk in and out without any difficulty.

The north of this country, as is well known, is hunted by the pack which takes its cognomen from its latitude; and on the south the merry voices of Jem Hills and the Heythrop are heard. The Bicester country is on the east, and the Worcestershire on the west. The best part is on the southern and eastern boundaries, where there is a considerable portion of grass, with a punisher for the pipes of the nags when a fox makes his point for Edge Hill. The sport these hounds have already enjoyed is extremely satisfactory; indeed, I have not yet heard of any other pack having done so well. They had a very

good day from Shuckborough, which lies at one extremity of the country, and another from Weston Park at the other extremity. They had, likewise, a capital fifty minutes when they met at Brailes. A very bad scent in Wychford Wood led to the conclusion that there would be no sport, so coffee-housing and smoking to wile away the time, bringing forth the usual accompaniment of indifference as to the working and whereabouts of the pack, enabled them to get away with a fox, which broke covert unknown to the great majority of the field. Major Shirley, however, who is not usually to be slipt when business can be transacted, got away with the hounds, as did also the under whipper-in and several others, but the Major cut them all down one by one, having all the glory to himself, till a lucky turn allowed some of the field to fall in with the pack. Breaking in the direction of Long Compton, the line bore to the left, leaving Rollwright on the right, to Hook Norton, where the fox got among some gardens, and taking advantage of a wood pile, scaled a wall, over which the hounds had to be assisted. Mr. North and the huntsman, who did not

get a start, had previously got into their places, so this check and its difficulties were overcome, when, pointing for Swacliffe the hounds rolled their fox over in the open, with not a dozen to witness their triumph. But a significant sequel remains to be told. On Major Shirley's arrival at home, and about to take off his coat, he drew the fox's brush from the pocket, when his German valet exclaimed with ecstacy, "Ah! sare, den you have shot him at last."

A day in the woodlands very commonly affords a good opportunity of forming an opinion of the working properties of hounds. I therefore availed myself of the opportunity of meeting them at Alcester, their principal woodland country, and where, for the convenience of cub-hunting, there are temporary kennels. The morning was boisterous and rough, and Cold Comfort, the covert first drawn, was in other respects exemplified. It held a fox, probably a brace, but the scent was wretched and a move was made to Rough Hill, where matters improved; still, there was very little scent, and no blood.

When the place of meeting is within moderate distance of Leamington there is invariably

a large muster; and on Wednesday, December the 10th, the appointment being in a good country, at Newbold Pacey, only six miles off, the field was unusually numerous. The morning, bright and cheering, induced many of the fair equestrians to grace the scene with their presence, and among them Mrs. George, who rode throughout the run in her accustomed intrepid and accomplished manner. Mr. Lucy's covert did not hold a fox, neither did Oakley Wood. Chesterton proved fortunate, and without much pressing a fox broke at the upper end, over Chesterton Field, pointing for Slokington Holt, but a short check intervened. A quick cast set matters right, when, skirting the Holt, running in the direction of Gaydon, over some very heavy plough, brought the hounds to their noses, and most effectively did they perform. Here a cur dog presented himself, and as he appeared to take great interest in the proceedings, I entertain little doubt he had been making himself unceremoniously intrusive. Another cast, however, recovered the line, and the hounds carried it into Gaydon Spinney, which, being a very small place, there appeared great probability of their

killing ; but, taking advantage of an opening, after being very closely pressed, he again faced the open, and was run to ground near Kineton. Drew Chadshunt, found, and ran over the bottom in the direction of Edge Hill, with the pleasing anticipation that the trying eminence would bring many of the nags to grief ; but the scent died away, and the fox was lost. Kineton Holt was on the road home, and, although quite late in the day, the hounds were again thrown into covert, when another fox very speedily made his exit. A great improvement of scent became manifest, and the hounds settling to their work over a very heavy country in the direction of Chadshunt, there appeared great probability of blood ; but a check saved the fox's life. This country is abundantly stocked with foxes, though I was sorry to hear of one person on the borders who has evinced some hostility. Upon more mature reflection he may relent ; it is to be hoped that he will, and as it is whispered that he is coming round, it would be uncourteous to make further allusions to a subject so ungrateful.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE NORTH WARWICKSHIRE COUNTRY AND
MR. BAKER'S HOUNDS.

It is a favourable omen of the continuous prosperity of foxhunting, with all the fashionable attractions and the gay blandishments of Leamington and other places of aristocratic renown, that the old baronial halls, once the pride of our ancestors, are not deserted by families who delight in the enjoyment of rural life, with its most delectable accompaniments. Nothing could have been more flattering than the cordial hospitalities I received from the commencement to the conclusion of my visit at Leamington: and the only regret I experienced was the limited space of time at my command not permitting me to accept one-half of the invitations which were so courteously presented. The social character with which foxhunting is intimately connected

forms one of its most attractive features. Our forefathers were wont usually to assemble at the festive board after their day's hunting, to recount their enterprises, their daring deeds, hairbreadth escapes, and proclaim the excellence of their hounds, most commonly passing their evenings in excessive devotion to the Bacchanalian deity. This order is now more frequently reversed, and the day previous to hunting is a more suitable period for social parties. To those who reside at a distance from the place of meeting it is an acceptable custom, and no society is more delightful than that which is found in those happy homes of England where the decorum of a country gentleman's establishment presides over all the inmates.

My first day's appearance with the North Warwickshire Hounds was at Beoley Hall, the seat of Mr. Lilly, who has only recently occupied that ancient mansion, which for a long period was untenanted and consequently dilapidated, but, with exquisite taste, he has restored its original beauties, and added the imposing luxuries and improvements of modern days. Beoley Hall, it must be observed, is on the outside boundary of the country on the

Worcestershire confines, between which, however, there is a strip intervening not hunted at all, where probably foxes are not preserved. In anticipation of a large field, a profuse *déjeuner* was provided, and Mr. Lilly's hospitalities were most extensively accepted. Upwards of two hundred horsemen assembled in the park, a great portion of whom partook of the substantial and *recherché* fare with which the table was so bountifully supplied. A large concourse of footpeople, also—needle-makers from Redditch—came forth to participate in the enchanting pleasures of the gay scene. At this distant date we must omit all details of the sport that ensued, and conclude with the remark that the men were well mounted by Mr. Page, of Birmingham, who usually provides them with horses when on this side of the country; the distance from Leamington being considerable, it is a great saving of Mr. Baker's stud. I was also mounted from his stables, and have ridden many a worse nag. I cannot conclude my remarks on this day's sport without noticing the abominable wire fences which are found on some farms in this part of the country. In many places they are so hidden by the hedges

as to be scarcely perceptible, the danger from them is consequently very great. Let a farmer make his ditches as deep and as wide as he thinks fit; let him make his hedges as strong as possible; but to place such invisible contrivances to injure horses and break men's necks in a foxhunting country is unjustifiable and irreconcileable with the manly character which adorns the name of an English farmer.

Several earnest solicitations from the sporting inhabitants of Coventry to meet at the railway station, which is close to the city, for the especial gratification of the distressed weavers, induced Mr. Baker to comply with the request, and Monday, February 25, 1861, was the day appointed. It was, in truth, a venatic carnival, and all the worthy citizens seemed to be keeping open house on the occasion. Mr. Drewes entertained the master of the hounds and a host of other friends, and Mr. Packwood's and every other house on the terrace seemed to be overflowing with welcomed guests. A request to parade the hounds for the inspection of the ladies appeared to be attended with difficulty approaching impossibility, so dense was the mass of footpeople through which they had to pass; nevertheless

it was accomplished, and Mr. Baker's gallantry was duly appreciated. Apart from sporting conventionalism it was a glorious scene. To attempt an approximate idea of the number of pedestrians assembled would be far beyond my powers of calculation; but, on the authority of a renowned military officer present, best enabled to form an estimate, there were between 30,000 and 40,000—a number, I believe, never previously collected on a similar occasion, and, as it was said, exceeding the number who were present to do homage to our gracious Sovereign when Her Majesty visited the city of Coventry. Enthusiastic foxhunters might cavil at such an unusual interruption to a portion of their morning's sport, but generous dispositions would, with unbounded satisfaction, for once sacrifice their own temporary pleasure with willingness, in contemplation of the happiness afforded to so many thousands; and more than that, with what heartfelt gratification would they behold the beaming countenances present. Whether it was that the exciting scene banished for the time all the despondencies of care and woe, or whether the conviction that brighter days were in store, an

impetus to their industry being graciously promoted by royal and aristocratic patronage, or whether it was a combination of both, I am unable to determine, but on no other occasion have I ever witnessed so vast an assemblage of happy faces. Surely all the inhabitants must have congregated on the spot, and Lady Godiva might have ridden through the city without any apprehension of encountering Peeping Toms. The road from the place of meeting to Stivechall, the first covert drawn, a distance of about two miles, was densely crowded with pedestrians, nearly one-third of whom were females; and it is but due to them all, to mention the strict order and decorum they observed. I could readily sympathise with the worthy master of the hounds in his anxiety for the safety of his pack as they proceeded through such a crowd on their way to Stivechall; but it was a needless apprehension, all on the route opened their ranks to enable them to pass without the slightest interruption. The covert is of no great extent, and being completely surrounded by foot people, the fox found in it had no chance of escape. To do so he made several attempts, but the hounds

ran into him, and his obsequies being performed with due solemnity afforded the pedestrians, at least as many of them as were able to congregate on the spot, an opportunity of witnessing the sporting ceremony—an event which will afford them an interesting reminiscence by impressing data on their memories of the time when their difficulties were diminishing. Having thus gratified his Coventry field, Mr. Baker's attentions were devoted to other duties, the legitimate sport of the day, and due consideration for the farmers in the immediate vicinity. Such an immense crowd of footpeople could not fail to occasion incalculable damage to the fences, trampling them down in a most destructive manner, and to have further permitted such devastation would have been unjustifiable. A long trot to the Chase Woods was therefore determined upon. No sooner were the hounds in covert than their welcome notes proclaimed a fox "at home;" away quickly through Haseley Hill to the Blackhill Wood, quitting which he ran a ring nearly to Honily, back to Haseley, through the Chase Woods, and away for Wakefield, when he turned to the left for Fernhill, and

again to the Chase Woods, where two foxes were before the hounds, and they changed. Settling to the fresh fox, the hounds ran him to Blackhill, thence to Wroxhall, nearly to Haywood, and finally to ground near Haseley Hall.

On the day following a more settled condition of the elements than we had experienced of late, tempted a vast concourse to assemble at Woodcote; many ladies from Leamington on horseback and in carriages adding grace to the gay scene, among whom was Mrs. Baker, who delights in a drive to the covert side whenever the weather will permit her, in her delicate state of health, to enjoy it. Lord Warwick's new plantation afforded a fox, which the hounds found in their usual masterly style. This was the fourth occasion of my witnessing their operations in the field, and I could not fail to admire their perfections in drawing the coverts and finding foxes. It is one of the most interesting of the many accomplishments with which a clever pack is gifted, when a favourite hound unerringly challenges on the doubtful scent as he winds his fox snugly curled up in his kennel; and, confident in the truth of their faithful leader,

his companions quickly join him with their tuneful cry.

A morning on the flags is to me a source of great enjoyment, more especially so with these hounds, having known the ancestry of several of them from my boyish days. Therefore, before describing them, it may be well to give some little history connected with that portion of the pack. Soon after the late celebrated Mr. George Forester, of Willey Park, in Shropshire, gave up his hounds, which he kept about thirty years, during the latter portion of the past and the early part of the present century, a few couples of hounds were kept by some of the sporting farmers in that neighbourhood, and eventually under the auspices of the late Sir Richard Acton, Bart., of Aldenham Park; and they procured some bloodhounds for the purpose of hunting the deer that escaped from the park. These the farmers took out to assist in their foxhunting exploits, and the late Lord Forester, anxious to encourage their sporting tastes, procured for them three very superior brood bitches from the Belvoir kennels. These were crossed with the bloodhound, and I can well remember hunting with

them forty years ago, when several hounds in the pack were in that way bred. One of these, called Whynot, was a most extraordinary creature, and was doomed to carry a belt of shot round her neck to prevent her out-pacing her companions, and this she carried for years. She was walked at Haughton, and on one occasion produced a litter of sixteen puppies. Monitor was another, also Wishful; and Dash-away, take him all in all, was as good a hound as a man could wish to follow. He was the sire of a litter of nine which all turned out clippers; their dam, whose name I cannot ascertain, rendered herself notorious for speed —she viewed a hare, and fairly coursed her down in a large field.

A cross was afterwards introduced, with some hounds, the greater portion of which were broken-haired, which were occasionally brought into the country from Wales by Mr. Jones, of Maesmoor, but I much doubt whether any benefit was derived from this strain: certainly not as regards symmetry and colour; some of them to this day may be recognised by traces of blue mottle. There are evidently two families of the black-and-tans.

In 1838, Chanter, Nora, and Gravity were also presented by Lord Forester from the Belvoir kennels, and they brought forth litters; Chanter by a hound they called Whynot, of the original black and tan breed; Nora by Windsor, who was descended from the Welch pack; and Gravity by Dreadnought, of the black and tan family. Unfortunately, however, there is no means of tracing with certainty their descendants, and this is rendered quite perplexing in consequence of the same names having been very frequently handed down through several generations, without dates. But this is enough, in conjunction with their appearances, to confirm my statement, that there are two families, and the great advantages to be gained by an infusion of the bloodhound appears manifest. They were called the "Wheatland Hounds," and about twenty years ago came into the possession of Mr. Baker, who continued to hunt that country till he came into this. That they have been the means of contributing greatly to the extraordinary sport shown since their introduction in North Warwickshire I entertain no doubt, and my opinion is confirmed by every sportsman

I have consulted, who, from having hunted constantly with them, is able to form correct conclusions. There are many packs of the present day very deficient in hunting powers —nose, industry, and sagacity—in which some cross is greatly needed to impart those important faculties. So much attention has been devoted to pace and beauty, that many important desiderata have been materially sacrificed. Several crosses from the bloodhound must necessarily take place, but I am persuaded that it is the only strain calculated to do good service in many kennels where there is deficiency of those qualities inherent in the bloodhound. Many masters of hounds and huntsmen are opposed to it, I am well aware, under the impression that hounds so bred have not the pace and endurance; that they are defective in their legs and feet, weak over the loins, and light in their thighs. During the first four or five crosses such imperfections may prevail, but not so when the system has been thoroughly carried out, as was the case with Mr. Baker's. The pack, in 1861, consisted of forty-three and a-half couples, whereof eleven and a-half couples are of the Wheatland strain; the

remainder were bred by Mr. Baker from other sources, or procured from other kennels ; eleven couples are of that season's entry. Commencing with the latter, Active and Nectar are both descended from the Wheatland Wenlock ; the former is a daughter of Affable, a very useful grey-pied bitch, bred by Mr. Thomson—the latter a son of Nosegay. They are both very promising. General, Grappler, Gipsy, and Gossamer, descended from the Pytchley Rallywood and Guilty, are a peculiarly clever litter, especially Grappler, a badger-pied dog, powerful and active. Potentate, a son of Manager and Prudence, has all the appearance of speed, and has entered well. Purity and Promise, daughters of Fatal and Patience, are clever and good workers. From the Honourable George Fitzwilliam's kennels there are four couples. Bluecap is a fine slashing young hound, so also is Bachelor. Famous, a daughter of the Belvoir Trusty and Factious, is good-looking, with considerable length of frame. Harmony, a half-sister on her sire's side (her dam Harpy), is very neat. Mariner, son of Marplot and Bounty, is a good-looking useful stamp of hound, and has already very highly distinguished himself in

his work. Marplot, his half-brother, is a very neat hound, of medium stature. Anodyne, from the Heythrop, a light hare-pied bitch, is pretty, but scarcely possesses sufficient indications of size and power, and the same observation applies to Mermaid, from the same kennel. Gamester, a six-season hunter from the Belvoir kennels, has gained so much favour in his work as to induce Mr. Baker to promote him as a future sire. Heedless, a badger-pied bitch from the Heythrop, possesses the wiry, active character which distinguishes that blood. Neighbour, from the Berkeley kennels, a five season hound, is a son of Lord Henry Bentinck's well-known Comrade and Nimble, and though perhaps a trifle heavy in his shoulders, can run at the head, and is a very efficient hound. I now come to one of the old Wheatland sort on both sides—Dauntless, daughter of Dashaway and old Lofty, who, I believe, never bred an unworthy offspring; she is black and tan, with remarkably good legs and feet, always in front, let the pace be what it may, and when the pack is in difficulties she can guide them with unerring certainty. Hotspur and Manager, from the Heythrop kennels, are

each of them worthy of especial notice, the latter particularly so, being the father of seven couples of very superior hounds now in these kennels. His sire is Ferdinand, his dam Matchless; the father descended from Earl Fitzwilliam's Richmond, the mother from the celebrated Oakley Factor. Hannibal, a black and white hound, son of Lord H. Bentinck's Contest, bred at the Berkeley kennels, from Heroine, is a low hound with vast power, on shorts legs of capital construction; he is uncommonly industrious in his work. Nimrod, Nathan, Pagan, Plunder, and Posey claim him as their progenitor, all of which, but most so the three latter, bear a strong family resemblance to their grandsire. The name of Lofty indicates her being an offspring of the celebrated descendant of the Wheatland family, likewise distinguished by that cognomen. She has good legs and feet, and she possesses the olfactory powers of her dam. Guider, Governess, Gaudy, and Gaylass, the produce of Manager and Guilty, do credit to their parentage. Garland, bred at the Berkeley kennels, is small but very neat and good, much resembling her sire, Sir Richard Sutton's Glider. Saucebox, one of the most

useful hounds in the pack, like many a worthy member of the human race, requires to be known that his good qualities may be appreciated. He boasts of no great beauty, has a coarse coat, but I witnessed so much of his excellence in his work as to pronounce him justly entitled to the honour of leaving some of his descendants who might in due time prove not unworthy of their parentage. He came from the Bramham Moor kennels, and is a son of Streamer and Rarity. Nancy is one of the last of the progeny of the late Mr. T. Assheton Smith's famous hound Nigel, and came from the Worcestershire kennels. She has good looks to recommend her, and from her blood ought to breed some valuable puppies. Grasper, a black and white tan hound, is very good, and is a descendant of the Wheatland Wenlock and Gaiety. Lifter is a son of Mr. Greaves's Pontiff, and this is his third season, of which year he has only five companions; his colour, approaching to a tan, is objectionable, but he possesses many excellencies to recommend him. Of the two-season hounds there is a goodly family of the Wheatland strain—Dashaway, Duchess, Diligent, and Dewdrop, the produce of Hotspur

and Dauntless ; Destiny, a daughter of Wenlock and Dahlia ; Lexicon, Latimer, Layman, Lady, Lively, and Lottery, descended from Manager and old Lofty ; and Wilful, daughter of Wenlock and Lufra. They have all good straight legs and feet. Destiny is a particularly clever creature, and Lexicon claims especial notice. Although Mr. Baker is enabled to breed a considerable number every year, the farmers in Warwickshire being so well disposed, and on his property in Wales he sends out many more, yet he annually makes additions of unentered drafts from some of the most celebrated kennels.

Greatly to the regret of his brother sportsmen, Mr Baker was unfortunately confined to the house with an alarming attack of bronchitis from the 16th of November to the 1st February, 1861. His hounds, therefore, were deprived of his valuable assistance during a great portion of the most important part of the season ; but the field management was kindly undertaken by Mr. Oswald Milne, whose popularity, perfect knowledge of hunting and of hunting etiquette, rendered him most unexceptionably qualified for the occasion. Mr. Baker has now been a master of hounds upwards of

twenty years, having commenced in Wales, and in the year 1843 he undertook to hunt the Wheatland country; subsequently he joined with it an engagement to hunt the Shropshire, and afterwards the Albrighton. Thus, when he took the North Warwickshire in 1855 he was no novice at his arduous duties, and the sport he has shown is the most substantial confirmation that he is "the right man in the right place." If in these remarks I were to confine myself exclusively to the sport I saw during one of the weeks I was with them it might be conjectured that I had been favoured by good fortune in making my visit at the right time: but it was the universal expression of every person I met that their sport of the season was unprecedented. Not that this announcement is to be accepted as applicable only to the present, for these hounds have had far more than an average share of sport from their first appearance in the country.

The first two seasons Mr. Baker hunted his own hounds, but since his engagement with Peter Collinson he transferred the horn to his hands, and the sport the hounds have afforded is quite sufficient to testify Peter's

competency. He is a superior horseman, and being well mounted is always in a good place, whether in the rough woodlands of the centre, the strong, deep, and distressing varieties of the western, or over the fine flying pastures of the Dunchurch side. He is well assisted by George Boxall, who came from the North Staffordshire, where under the skilful guidance of Joe Maiden he could not fail to attain much practical knowledge. John Ransom is the under whipper-in, and enters very satisfactorily. Since the frost these hounds have been hunting four days in the week—Mr. Baker being anxious to compensate for the lost time of that long interregnum.

The North Warwickshire country, in former days, comprised a portion of the Warwickshire—in other words, the whole country was, in the time of Mr. Corbet, occupied by him. Enthusiastic sportsmen of old were wont to tell with glee of the gallant deeds of hounds, and the desperate runs they had with them. The capabilities of the country, therefore, are of ancient date, though it is much to be doubted if the sport was equal to what is now seen. On that gentleman's retirement

in favour of Lord Middleton, his lordship abandoned the greater portion of what now forms the North Warwickshire; and the Warwickshire woodlands, as they were then designated, were seldom enlivened with the cheering notes of hounds and horn. Other masters succeeded, and this state of affairs continued upwards of twenty years, when Mr. Robert Vyner established a pack of hounds at Solihull to hunt the vacant country, which then assumed the distinction by which it is now acknowledged. In 1838, Mr. T. S. Hellier succeeded Mr. Vyner, after whom Mr. Wilson; but that gentleman resigning after two seasons' mastership, the country was entrusted to neighbouring hunts, the Atherstone taking the northern portion and the Warwickshire, under Lord Willoughby, hunting the remainder two days in the week. Arrangements were entered into in 1853 with Mr. Selby Lowndes, who occupied it two seasons, when he relinquished it in favour of the present master. It contains a considerable portion of very strong woodlands, which hold stout and good foxes, very difficult to bring to hand. It also contains a portion, on

the Dunchurch side, of the best bit of country in England.

Next to the delightful ecstacies attendant upon a good run is the ride to covert on a favourable morning, especially in the society of agreeable companions, when every memorable incident connected with the inexplicable phenomenon of scent is introduced, all the probabilities of the day's sport discussed, and the charms of anticipation flow harmoniously and free. Such was my case to the fullest extent as on the last day of February I proceeded to meet the hounds at Bilton Lodge. If a large field of sportsmen had assembled there, how greatly were their numbers augmented when we arrived at Hill Morton, some three miles distant, where, as it was known that covert was to be visited, a great portion of the field had mustered, awaiting the arrival of the pack. The Quorn, the Pytchley, the Warwickshire, and the Atherstone had each representatives, in addition to most of the regular attendants on the North Warwickshire, including Mrs. Colonel Arthur, Mrs. Hanbury, Mrs. George, Mrs. Beach, and other ladies, whose equestrian accomplishments with hounds have gained them the

highest distinction. Foxhunting would be divested of a great portion of its charms if ladies were opposed to the pursuit, while the gay scene at the covert side is rendered infinitely more enchanting and interesting when graced with their patronage. It is a delightful sight to witness a finished horsewoman, whose seat is the very perfection of elegance, and whose delicate hand the sagacious creature knows so well how to appreciate, riding her well-trained hunter over a country.

The run of the season, however, occurred after I had left, and I must, therefore, depend on the kindness of a friend for a description of it. The place of meeting was the Bull and Butcher Inn, but the partiality the foxes were represented to have exhibited for early lamb, induced Mr. Baker to repair at once to Bagshaw's Gorse, where the hounds found instanter, and as quickly went away, leaving Lester's Piece on the right, nearly to Bunker's Hill, but turned to the right of Thurlestone, in the direction of Fulham Wood, when, making a circuit, they reached Causton, at which place three or four foxes were on foot, and the hounds settling to a fresh one, ran

back at a telling pace to Thurleston, and within one field of Bagshaw's Gorse to Bunker's Hill, across the brook for Grandborough, and on to Shuckborough, through Calcot Spinney, back nearly to the brook under Bunker's Hill, where the hounds ran into him in the presence, out of a very large field, of not more than half a score. The time, from Causton Spinney to the "Who-hoop," one hour and ten minutes.

During the season of 1861 and '62, Mr. Baker's health which had never recovered the effects of bronchitis, precluded him from accompanying his hounds regularly in the field, though his indomitable pluck, love of hunting, and ardent desire to show sport, prompted him too frequently to make the attempt. He was, indeed, too regardless of himself; thus, his medical attendants found it imperatively necessary to advise him to seek a warmer climate in the West of England, and after Christmas he was reluctantly induced to leave his hounds and submit to become a temporary exile at Penzance, hoping that his health would return. But unhappily it was a vain hope, and at the end of the season he resigned the mastership, and his hounds

were sold by Messrs. Tattersall, at the kennels, on the 10th of May; his successor, Mr. Oswald Milne, to whom he would willingly have sold them, not wishing to become a purchaser. It was doubtless a painful trial to part with his pack, which in the course of twenty years he had brought to very great perfection, and which had afforded wonderful sport. It must, however, be a source of unalloyed satisfaction to him, when reminiscences of by-gone days flit across his mind, that he had given the greatest satisfaction to all who hunted with his hounds during the seven seasons he was in North Warwickshire, and that the circumstance which compelled his resignation was a source of universal sorrow.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE WORCESTERSHIRE COUNTRY AND COLONEL CLOWES'S HOUNDS.

The sporting capabilities of Worcestershire are not confined to the pre-eminent and exciting pursuit of foxhunting, for the nature of the soil is admirably suited to the preservation of game, both fur and feather. The lovers of the leash have fair scope for the enjoyment of their pastime; while the Teme and other streams which pay tribute to the Severn present abundant opportunities for the enjoyment of fishing, so that with a taste for diversity of amusements, a sportsman never can apprehend the infelicitous condition emanating from deficiency of resources. The social habitudes of the inhabitants, too, are of that hospitable character that blends all the amenities of life with the sports of the field. At the same time that game is abundantly cultivated, the preserva-

tion of foxes is in most parts duly considered. Indeed, in this enlightened age, when it is so universally understood how game and foxes can each of them be maintained in ample numbers provided keepers are diligent, experienced, and conscientious in their duties, it would be a significant slander even to suppose that the enjoyments of a whole county were sacrificed to imaginary self-interests. It is only necessary to visit the well-stored coverts around Madresfield, on the beautiful estate of the Earl of Beauchamp to be convinced of this, or the splendid Croome coverts on the opposite bank of the stately Severn, where the Earl of Coventry entertains his friends of the trigger with grand battues, and his friends of the chase with abundance of foxes. Croome Perry Wood, as in days of yore, is still a favourite resort of foxes, although the unceremonious system of railway engineering has struck a line through the very centre. Breedon Hill is likewise a much admired rendezvous, affording a diversity of country in the way of stone walls, from their dimensions presenting somewhat formidable impediments to aspiring horsemen. This portion of the country being

in immediate proximity with the Cotswold and within easy reach of Cheltenham, affords the members of that hunt opportunities of seeking charms in variety. North of Pershore and Evesham is a strong vale, capable of affording good hunting runs very similar in character with the Warwickshire country, which lies on the east, and where the two hunts have opportunities of joining in friendly rivalry. In this district there are good holding coverts at Rous Lench, Grafton, and Hanbury. Hewell Park and Broomsgrove Lickey are still further north, the latter place, from its elevation and the dryness of its soil, seldom abounding with scent unless a fox travels eastward into the North Warwickshire country. This is a convenient and favourite fixture with a numerous coterie of sportsmen who affect the affluent vicinity of Birmingham. Travelling westward, and crossing the river Severn, which runs nearly through the middle of the country, is Bewdley Forest, a splendid tract of woodlands, which if they could be conveyed to some distant hunts, would be highly valued—by Mr. Tailby, for instance—but here it is disregarded. On the north of this line the

Albrighton exercise their prerogative. The Ran-Dans is neutral with the two hunts, but unfortunately very short of foxes. At Shakenhurst, near Cleobury Mortimer, on the confines of the Ludlow country, are the well preserved coverts of that fine sportsman and excellent judge of hounds, Mr. Wickstead, who for many years hunted part of the country included in the North Staffordshire. A little further towards the south is Pensax, not far distant from the Abberley Hills, a wild, romantic territory, with a chain of woodlands, intersected with hill and dale, extending to the nearest extremity of the Malvern Hills. This forms the outline of the western boundary. On the same side of the river is Witley Court, the princely domain of Lord Dudley, with Shrawley Wood, always a sure find, near at hand. The intermediate space, including Cotheridge, Hopton Court, and the Rhydd, is well preserved, and also Blackmore Park, formerly the residence of a much respected master, the late Mr. Hornyholt, situated in that fine vale over which the fashionable Malvern commands such an enchanting prospect. Nearly midway between Worcester and Kidderminster is the crack

covert, Bishop's Wood, and near to Droitwich Westwood Park, the family seat of Sir John Pakington, where there are some large coverts; but the prevailing character of the soil being light, it is not generally favourable to sport. At Ombersley there is always a good show of foxes in Lord Sandy's coverts; and under the friendly protection of that highly-respected social companion, Mr. John Clifton, whose constant care is to promote harmony and kindred feelings, the Himbledon woods are well stored. Mr. Laslett, at Abberton, on the outskirts, Mr. Tearne, near Hallow, Mr. E. Bearcroft, at Goosehill, and "The Squire" of Crown East, are trusty friends; and Peopleton Rough holds foxes which often afford good runs.

This country does not rejoice in the character of being favourable to scent, in the true acceptation of the term, at least such is the general impression, though I think the conclusion is sometimes rather too strongly expressed. That there are many countries infinitely better I cannot attempt to deny, but there are several worse. There is a considerable diversity of soil, and more

ploughed land than is pleasant, but I do not imagine the innovations of the plough have increased so extensively as in many other parts, Leicestershire to wit. Then, again, hounds are not so constantly perplexed by cattle foils as they are in the grazing districts. The success of a day's sport is so subservient to the condition of scent that every one endeavours to unravel the mysteries of the wonderful and important phenomenon. It is universally admitted that the atmosphere is the essential agent, by the effects which it produces on the evaporative and absorbent properties of the soil; and this appears to be confirmed by experience, as it may be frequently observed that there are some days when there is a fair scent on grass, with very little, if any, on the ploughed land, where the evaporation is more active, and arable lands, thoroughly pulverised by cultivation, are more subservient to evaporation than those which have not been recently worked. From this cause the modern practice of good husbandry, in recognising autumnal cultivation, conduces to diminish scent. When evaporation is nearly in a normal condition, it must therefore be infer-

red that the scent will lie. The effects of the wind are very great, but the first verse of the old song, "A southerly wind and a cloudy sky," is simply a poetical illusion, for there are more good scents when the wind blows from the east. The best scenting season within my recollection was that of 1852 and '53, when the earth was deluged with rain, yet this year, up to the present period, with an abundance of wet, scent has not been good. To account for this we have experienced much diversity of temperature. The difference in the quantity of rainfall in different parts of England is sufficient to account for variations in the amount of scent which may prevail in one country but not in another, provided they are so situated as to render that phenomenon characteristic; yet when that is not the case it most probably proceeds from the variations in the quality of the soil.

The first master of foxhounds in this country, concerning whom there appears to be anything known, was Major Bland; but that gentleman's operations were principally devoted to the southern and western boundaries, including the vicinity of Corse Lawn,

together with a portion of the Ledbury country. I believe the late Lord Stamford occasionally brought his hounds into Worcestershire, but in those days it was so much the custom to visit any places where foxes were known to resort, that there is much difficulty, at a period so remote, of tracing their movements with certainty. After revelling in the Elysian fields of Leicestershire, Lord Foley brought his hounds into his own county about the year 1812. Be that as it may, I have good authority for stating that his lordship was master of the hounds in this country the following year; and he likewise wandered, making a portion of the Albrighton country the arena of his rambles. In 1815, Colonel Newnham was at the head of affairs, and he hunted a similar tract of country to that of his predecessor till the spring of 1818—a circumstance that I can with confidence record, in consequence of an inspiring event which made a most lasting impression on my memory. The charms of foxhunting were first impressed on my boyish sensibilities in the Christmas holidays of that year by Colonel Newnham's Hounds, when they met at the gorse covert of my good old friend Mr.

Pudsey, who till his lamented death was one of the best preservers of foxes in the Albrighton Hunt. After Colonel Newnham resigned, Mr. Hornyhold, of Blackmore Park, succeeded with a very superior establishment, at the head of which was Kit Atkinson, assisted by John King, with the plucky Joe Maiden, then in his novitiate, acting as second whipper-in. With these hounds I saw the most severe day on the 9th of January, 1822, of which I have any recollection. They found in Pudsey's Gorse at five minutes after twelve, and lost their fox on Orton Hills at fifty minutes after three, with few checks, and those not of long continuance. When Mr. Hornyhold's establishment was broken up the country was vacant a short period, but Mr. Parker, who had signalised himself as a fine performer over a country, and also as being well versed in the mysteries of the chace, zealously supported by the Earl Coventry and his family, soon got together a pack of hounds, with which, hunting them himself, he succeeded in showing considerable sport; but the exchequer was low, and they were consequently disposed of. Then came Mr. Clutton Brock, a fine sports-

man, whose hunting lore was not the less valuable from having been cultivated by the ever celebrated pastor and sportsman, the Rev. William Smith, of Badger, whose pride it was to instil into his pupils the education of gentlemen, with an appropriate taste for foxhunting, so highly prizeable in those who are destined to the blessings of country lives. Mr. Brock had kennels constructed at Henwick, and engaged William Carter as huntsman. The horses were placed under the care of Mr. Bloxsidge, whose experience and good judgment rendered the services of a stud groom unnecessary. The subscription, however, was inadequate to the expenditure; the establishment was of the most *recherché* order, and as Mr. Brock was not disposed to draw too deeply on his private resources, after a four seasons' mastership he declined, another imperative reason also causing him to come to that resolution—his health was not equal to the exertion. Apprehensions then arose that the goodly country would be without hounds; but a gallant naval officer, Captain Candler, came to the rescue, who, with a most friendly disposition and popular attributes, ingratiated himself with all classes, for

whether in the drawing-room or in the hunting field he was equally at home. He was particularly prepossessed in favour of hounds of large stature, after the model of Mr. John Warde; on his resignation in 1846, he sold them to Mr. Davenport to augment his forces in North Staffordshire. The country then fell into the hands of a committee, with the Hon. Dudley Ward in the ostensible position of prime minister, and Tom Matthews as huntsman, engaged in the arduous task of forming a pack of hounds from drafts—and crude materials they had to commence with. New kennels were built at Rankswood, but this dynasty continued only one season, when the command was resigned by Mr. Ward in favour of Mr. John Cookes. About this time William Stansby, who had been for many years first whip at Badminton, was appointed huntsman, and continued in that office several seasons, when Sam Taylor, who whipped in to him, was promoted. But, although a man may distinguish himself as a whipper-in as he had done, it is not invariably the case that he is equally proficient as a huntsman. So it was with Taylor, and, after a season's probation, he resumed his former position. Mr.

John Cookes having kept the hounds two seasons, handed them over, with the responsibilities thereunto appertaining, to Colonel Clowes, who, with great success and popularity, retained the sole management six years, when Mr. Cookes had them a second time, during which period the very ostensible duties of secretary were undertaken by that excellent sportsman, Mr. Henry Clutton, brother to a former master, Mr. Clutton Brock, and he continued his highly-valued services till two years since, when, in consequence of a sad fall, he was, greatly to his own regret, in which all his friends sincerely sympathise with him, compelled to withdraw from those pleasures he so ably promoted and so fondly loved. John Ward, who had graduated at the classic coverts in Cambridgeshire, and eaten his commons during twenty-three terms at Stratton Hall, was engaged as huntsman. In 1857, Colonel Clowes joined Mr. Cookes in the mastership, an arrangement that still continues much to the satisfaction of the country, for it is impossible that greater efforts could be made to show sport. William Mawe came here as huntsman in 1859, having been initiated by Will Butler

with the Badsworth; thence he went to the Cottesmore, took a turn with the Atherstone, after which he succeeded David Edwards as huntsman to Mr. Wheble, and held a similar appointment in Warwickshire till he came to these hounds.

The present kennels, which have been occupied three seasons, are at Crowle, convenient to the residence of Colonel Clowes, the stabling of the ancient Manor House being converted into lodging-rooms, very comfortable and healthy, while the house affords accommodation for the huntsman, whippers-in, and others connected with the establishment. The pack may be said to have originated when the committee first assumed the reins of government, sixteen years ago; but the improvement made by Colonel Clowes and Mr. Cookes is very significant of the good judgment they have exercised. There are thirty-one and a half couples of working hounds, and fourteen couples entered this season. They are very strong in two-seasons hunters, of which there are thirteen couples; there are five and a half couples in their third season, and five couples in their fourth season. Commencing with this season's entry is a very

clever hound, Conqueror, by Lord Fitzhardinge's Cromwell and Telltale, also of Berkeley origin. Harper, Hazard, Hasty, and Harmony comprise a promising litter by Lord Fitzhardinge's Palmerston and the Worcestershire Handmaid, a daughter of the Warwickshire Saffron. Hasty, with capital thighs and stylish appearance, though not one of the elect at Birmingham, deserves notice for having found favour with the judges, who awarded a cup to the farmer for bringing her to maturity, and Hazard exhibits a wonderful likeness to his maternal grandsire, Palmerston. The father of these young hounds is a son of Factor and Paragon; Factor, by Farmer, a great favourite in his day at the Berkeley kennels. Manager and Merrylass have also the Saffron blood in their veins, Sportsman, their sire, being a son of Saffron and the Berkeley Charity, daughter of Drunkard and Cora; Rakish, though rather small, but exceedingly neat, deserves very honourable mention for her performance, to which I can bear testimony, hunting a cold scent with wonderful precision over some exceedingly dry ploughed land, in pursuit of a fox found at Ganna on the day they met at Grafton. She is the produce of the Duke of

Beaufort's Bondsman and Lord Fitzhardinge's Rakish, a daughter of Sir Richard Sutton's Rambler. Splendour, a fine, commanding young hound, is another worthy representative of the Saffron family, through Sportsman, and he secured a cup for the farmer who reared him. By the same sire is Stormer, a dark blue hound of great length ; his colour, by the way, is sometimes characteristic of Saffron's descendants. A very nice litter of three couples, from Abelard and Tempest, includes Tapster, Tippler—an unsuccessful candidate for fame at Birmingham, with capital shoulders and true symmetry to recommend him—Tyrant, Truelass, very elegant, Toilet, and Twilight, all of them with nice necks, and good heads well set on. Abelard was a son of Ganymede and the Berkeley Actress, by their Boxer, a son of Lord Gifford's Boniface. In their second season are Gracious, Governess, and Gaiety, very striking in their appearance, full of the Warwickshire Tarquin and Saffron blood, the issue of Sportsman and Gossip, Tarquin's granddaughter. Gracious had been sent on a visit to Berkeley, where she was introduced to Cromwell, and I shall watch the result with much interest. The blood is

nearly allied, as Cromwell is a son of Lord Henry Bentinck's Contest and Crazy, by the Warwickshire Tarquin; Pillager, Pleasant, Paragon, and Pastime, all of a remarkably useful stamp, are by another Tarquin, bred at the Pytchley kennels, by their Trojan and Hopeful. Sailor, a ticked hound, with great length and speedy proportions, another candidate for honours at Birmingham, is also a representative of the Sportsman family and Testy, already mentioned as the dam of Stormer. Statesman, a good-looking, hare-pied hound, is by Sir Richard Sutton's Bajazet and Symphony. Trueman, a prize-taker, Traitor, Trumpeter, Tragedy, Termagant, and Tulip, very neat and of good colour, are by the aforesaid Abelard out of Tempest, bred by Mr. Assheton Smith, a daughter of his Trojan and Rosemary. Actor and Ajax, in their third season, particularly wiry and clever, are also descended from Tempest and Lord Leconfield's Archer, a hound of immense power, and rather above the average standard, but whose progeny do not appear to exceed those good proportions which are so commonly appreciated. Monitor is a very good-looking, useful hound, and has, perhaps, more bone

than any other in the kennel ; he enjoys the patronymic of his sire, and inherits his great bone from his maternal grandfather, Lord Fitzhardinge's Farmer. Promise, a badger-pied bitch, boasts of high lineage, being a daughter of the Duke of Beaufort's Pilgrim and Pamela. Pilgrim was a grandson of the much-renowned Badminton Potentate. Stratagem is a remarkably good-looking hound, and his good conduct has gained for him so much favour, that he is destined to perpetuate his race ; it may, therefore, be admissible to search somewhat extensively into his family and their characters. He is a son of Lord Leconfield's Archer and Symphony, a daughter of Lord Fitzhardinge's Spaniard and Wanton. Spaniard, by Lord Henry Bentinck's Stranger and the Berkeley Margaret. Wanton was by Wisdom out of Novelty, by Lord Fitzwilliam's Mentor. Novelty was the dam of Nathan, who found his way from the Berkeley to the Heythrop kennels, where he was entered, and gained so much favour with Jem Hills as to induce him to breed extensively from the good old hound. Neighbour, his brother, was entered by Lord Gifford, who highly appreciated him, and there are descendants of his doing

justice to their parentage in the Cotswold kennels. Neighbour's progeny were generally very fine in their coats, and altogether characteristic of high breeding. Symphony is also the mother of Sultan, a reddish-pied hound of fine symmetry, a year older than Stratagem. Sultan is a son of Mr. Foljambe's Masker. Of the same age is Trollop, a powerful, short-legged daughter of Traveller and Bracelet. Music, a five-season hunter, chanted harmoniously, and displayed her powers to perfection in the run from Ganna. In the same year are Active and Animate, by Lord Fitzhardinge's Abelard and Winifred, daughter of the Duke of Beaufort's Warlock and his Patience. In my description of Mr. Tailby's hounds, I remarked that he had three couples of hounds of the same litter working in their fourth season, as an event of not common occurrence. Singularly enough, a very similar case occurred in these kennels last season—Active and Animate, with their brother and sisters, numbering two couples and a half; but what renders this more interesting, Mr. Tailby's and Colonel Clowes's are very nearly related, Mr. Tailby's being by Andover, a son of Abelard, the sire of Colonel Clowes's hounds.

It is a source of vast pleasure to revisit a country where, in the full vigour and excitement of youth, one had participated in the sport at a period when it effects the liveliest impressions on the mind ; and to recognise old friends and “old familiar faces,” though still with feelings of regret that all the friends and all the familiar faces of olden days are not present, nay, that too many of them have ceased to enjoy their once favourite amusement.

Scrupulous in the selection of country, I made choice of Grafton, preferring it to that which is designated the crack fixture of the hunt, Bishop’s Wood, and most fortunate it was that I eschewed the latter place, as it was signalised by a blank day. Many were the reminiscences of by-gone times as I rode to Grafton, the well-known covert called the Trenches on an eminence on my left, with Churchill Wood on the right, an inviolable line which foxes selected in Parker’s days. Whether or not he held converse with them I cannot declare, but the Trenches constantly afforded the commencement, and Churchill Wood the finale of the run. I found a goodly field assembled, very few of whom I personally knew, except Mr.

Barnett, the representative of the light weights, who still goes gaily when opportunities occur; Mr. Watkins, always hard to beat, and Mr. Smith, a welter-weight, equally determined, when hounds can run. Now there were two Mr. Smiths of great notoriety, masters of foxhounds, both distinguished by the same Christian name of Thomas, at one time hunting adjoining countries; and there are many Smiths, and many rejoicing in the appellative of John, but as there was only one Tom Smith, so there is only one John Smith, and that is the gentleman to whom I refer. Grafton not holding a fox, a visit was made to Kiteswood, a very promising covert, and the hounds had scarcely begun to draw when a fox, without awaiting the ceremony of being found, broke away through a phalanx of horses, and the instant he showed himself out of covert an unhappy tyro began hastily to halloo, for which indiscretion John Smith began to rate him; but it was a fine, gallant fox, not to be headed by halloos, nor would the rating of the unfortunate novice have turned him from his point, even if it had been made in his very teeth. It was quite evident one of two

events was on the card ; if there was a scent, we were in for a clipper ; otherwise the fox would soon be lost, for it was quite certain he never intended to linger and allow hounds to work up to him. The latter, however, was the result, for the hounds, on being got out of covert, could not hunt him a mile. Ganna, sometimes called the Twelve Acres, another splendid covert, was then drawn, and with a quick find, the hounds getting away with their fox on very fair terms, settled down, and at a great pace ran to Little Inkberrow, affording an aspiring field opportunities for display. At this point a check occurred, the fox having contemplated a resting-place in the farm buildings, but, changing his tactics, he beat a retreat, and was viewed as if homeward bound, when the hounds being again laid on, bearing to the right, ran him to Abbots Morton, where, on the hill, a sheep foil brought them to a slight check ; working through the difficulty, however, with praiseworthy industry, their hunting powers were still elicited by the parched state of the ploughed land, the surface of which, from the recent boisterous north-west winds, was in a condition we are

apt to witness in March, but very rarely in December. It was here that Music, Rakish, and Harmony particularly distinguished themselves, Rakish speaking to the line of the fox down a dry furrow with faithful accuracy. At a hunting pace they worked it over Oldberrow Green and Bouts, by Knole Barn, across the road, over Inkberrow Fields, recrossing the road to Weethley Wood, on the Marquis of Hertford's estate, where it was sad to contemplate the splendid old mansion in Ragley Park that has been unoccupied for so many years. The next point was Bevington Waste, where the scent grew worse, and the fox was finally lost on the Marquis of Hertford's property. Without affording great opportunities for the display of horsemanship, though at times the pace was good, it was a fine hunting run ; but when it is mentioned that several aspiring heroes were observed charging some high posts and rails when hounds were at check, which posts and rails would have pounded more than a moiety of a field, even if hounds had been running, it is easy to conceive what they would do with the exciting effects of pace by way of stimulant. The Messrs. Gerrard and Mr. Milward,

with many more in the country, do not often allow hounds to get away from them ; and there are several others, including Mr. Walker and the Messrs. Essex, who are equally good sportsmen.

The foxes in Worcestershire, though not over numerous, are of a good wild sort, a result of being constantly hunted, and they are not very readily brought to hand. When it is observed that foxes found in the vale below Malvern not unfrequently lead the pack over those formidable hills, the altitude of which is nearly 1,500 feet above the sea level, it may be readily understood that horses require a considerable amount of ascending power.

What a fine open Christmas, and what a rare time for young aspirants to fame, who are now revelling in the enjoyments of the vacations, to become initiated in the exhilarating delights of foxhunting ! There is scarcely an event in life which strikes so deeply, and with such intense pleasure, as the first run with foxhounds. As an impressive illustration, here is an extract from a letter just received from an old friend, in which his reminiscences are so graphically

displayed, that, being connected with the past history of Worcestershire, my kind correspondent can scarcely fail to be recognised :—“ My first day’s hunting with foxhounds was in the winter of 1813, with Lord Foley. I was then a boy on foot. We found at Shipley Gorse, and ran to Snowden Pool, and from there to Tong Castle, where, to my inexpressible delight, I found the fox, after a short check, in a bed of cabbages. Set him going again, and the hounds soon had him in a bog at a pool tail, into which I dashed, and brought him out, as you may suppose, with a wonderful amount of pride, which was greatly increased by the worthy Rector of Badger introducing me to his lordship.”

CHAPTER XIX.

THE VALE OF WHITE HORSE COUNTRY AND
MR. CROOME'S HOUNDS.

This country originally formed a portion of that which is now denominated the Old Berkshire, till the good time arrived when a greater abundance of foxes and other facilities for the enjoyment of the “noble science” rendered a division expedient. This took place in 1831, the second year of the late Earl Ducie, then the Hon. Henry Moreton, being master of the hounds, which his lordship presided over with great success till 1842, when that determined enemy to field sports, the gout, compelled him to seek other amusements. In the hope of restoration to health he lent his hounds to Lord Henry Bentinck, but the fond anticipation terminated in disappointment; the noble Earl could not regain sufficient strength to contend with the fatigues of the chase and combat with the

vicissitudes of the elements, as he had previously done too incautiously; he therefore was compelled to abandon the delights of foxhunting and beguile his leisure hours with farming, in which he distinguished himself as one of the most celebrated breeders of shorthorns; thus the name of Lord Ducie and the famous Duchess breed, to which he was justly partial, hold a conspicuous position in the portly volume called the *Herd Book*. On the Earl's retirement, Lord Gifford became his successor, with a pack of hounds he had formed of good materials, in a vacant district on the borders of Herefordshire and the Ludlow country; and being hunted with great skill by his lordship, as they ripened into perfection, the sport they afforded was of the highest character. Entering into all the details of the chase, both in the kennel and in the field, with the utmost zeal and good judgment, and possessing all the attributes of a master of foxhounds, it was a source of universal regret throughout the country when it was made known, in the spring of 1845, that it was his intention to resign. No gentleman coming forward willing to embark solely in the responsibilities, a committee was formed,

Mr. Cripps taking the active management. This continued five seasons, when Mr. Villebois was inaugurated in office, and with an ample purse and generous spirit that gentleman hunted the country in superlative style till the spring of 1854, when Lord Gifford—who, soon after his resignation, formed another pack, with which in succession he hunted the Ludlow country, the flinty regions of the H. H., and the rough woodlands of Herefordshire—returned once more to the Elysian fields of the Vale of White Horse. This arrangement continued only three seasons. Lord Gifford's habits and plucky energetic spirit, augmented by the excitement of hunting his own hounds, would probably have overcome his constitution; he was therefore induced to withdraw from the M. F. H. list, and enjoy the sport with other hounds.

After much persuasion, Mr. Croome was induced to undertake the responsibilities; how admirably he has fulfilled the sanguine expectations of his friends is best determined by the excellence of the sport the hounds have had under his management. It is generally a most difficult matter to obtain the services of a gentleman who is a resident in

the country, more especially of one who knows it so well, is such a brilliant performer, and is so enthusiastically, so passionately fond of foxhunting as Mr. Croome.

In all parts of the hunt the foxes are well cared for alike by the landed proprietors and the farmers; and it proclaims the esteem in which Mr. Croome was held by the latter very influential class, that, the year before he resigned, a subscription of £200 was added by them to the guaranteed fund.

The kennels and stables, which are at the entrance to Oakley Park, within a mile of Cirencester, were erected during Earl Ducie's mastership, at the time when the division of the country took place. Without any pretension to architectural refinement, either externally or internally, they are spacious and convenient.

Mr. Croome's pack consisted of forty couples of hounds, one of which, Tragedy, is in her eighth season; there is one couple in their seventh season, one couple and a half six seasons, two couples and a half five seasons, five couples and a half four seasons, eight couples and a half three seasons, twelve couples two seasons, and eight couples and a half of young

hounds. They are very strong in two and three season hunters. Commencing with this year's entry, Bluemaid, black and white with tan, is lengthy and neat. Relish, bred at the South Oxfordshire kennels, has a half face, which somewhat detracts from her appearance, but she has good symmetry to compensate for it. Tuneful is represented as having entered remarkably well, and is, therefore, a great favourite. Jessamine, from the South Berkshire, is quite one of Mr. Montagu's sort. Lancet, from the South Oxfordshire, and Lucifer, bred in these kennels, are both very useful looking young hounds; a clever litter, Coaxer, Cruiser, Concord, and Charlotte, descended from Mr. Morrell's Challenger and the Cheshire Julia, do credit to the kennel from whence they came. Among the two season hunters, Dryden, a son of Sir W. Wynn's Mameluke and the South Oxfordshire Dewdrop is a remarkably clever grey-pied hound, and has an excellent character. Sunderland and Commodore are both grown in the right form to stand work. Trojan is a particularly handsome hound, of very rich colour, black and white, with a good deal of tan. Gameboy has gained distinction, the prize

given by Mr. Croome having been awarded to the farmer who walked him; he has capital shoulders, legs, and feet. In the third season, Forester, a son of Mr. Morrell's Forester and the Cheshire Violet, a useful sort of hound, is in good esteem. Gossip, a very neat bitch, from the Heythrop, took my attention amazingly, and she is bred from a capital sort, their Gamble and Pamela. Rallywood, in his fourth season, I was much pleased with; perhaps he may be a trifle high on his leg, but there is a vast deal of character about him, and might not disgrace a matron with contrary conformation and of characteristic family. Stately may, I think, be selected as the belle of the kennel, and is a daughter of Mr. Morrell's celebrated Hercules.

It is a subject for regret that walks are not more numerous in this prosperous vale, consequently it is necessary to purchase young hounds rather extensively every year to fill up the vacancies. The South Oxfordshire, South Berkshire, and Cheshire kennels have usually been resorted to by Mr. Croome for this purpose.

William Bolton, who was the huntsman at the time I visited the country, commenced as

whipper-in to the Grove Hounds, and was at one time in the service of Capt. Percy Williams, in the Rufford country. He was likewise six or seven years at Lord Yarborough's, from whence he came to undertake the arduous duty with these hounds. He is a light weight, and a steady good horseman, gets well to his hounds without presuming to ride for riding sake, an error not unfrequently committed by young beginners. On the two occasions when I saw him in the field he did his work quite satisfactorily ; and the appearance of the hounds does him great credit. They are remarkably clean in their coats, and full of muscle ; in fact, when I saw them in kennel I thought them too high, an opinion I should have brought to a conclusion had I not seen them in their work, which I did in the Bradon country, when they had a most punishing day. At times the pace was very great, but they showed no symptoms of distress, and I never saw hounds come home fresher than they did after so much work, a certain test of condition.

Mr. Croome experienced a serious loss in his stud under singular circumstances. Early in the month of December his favourite

hunter, Duncan Gray, fell with him over a fence into a lane, doubling his head under him, but got up and came home apparently well, and went out in his turn again a few days afterwards. When fifteen miles from home it was discovered that he was seriously amiss, and he shortly died. Upon a *post mortem* examination it was found that he had sustained an injury in the spinal chord. This horse was purchased from Sir W. Wynn, Bart., and had carried Mr. Croome from the time he first commenced the mastership of these hounds. The stables contain twelve hunters, four for the master, and a like number for each of the men. Miracle, a bay horse, has been ridden by Mr. Croome three seasons; Grimaldi is a grey horse, very perfect and fast; Wentworth, a fine bay horse, of great power and breeding; and Little John, a brown horse, under fifteen hands high, is an extraordinary exemplification of the term “long, low, and strong,” having to carry fifteen stone, under which no fence is too big or pace too fast for him. Soldier, a bay, was formerly ridden two seasons by Joshua Wheatley, at that time the whipper-in, a very superior artist in the pigskin; Anchor, a

chesnut horse, signalled himself a short time since by jumping the brook at Flistridge, when only three or four others got over, though many got in ; Tiptop, a grey horse, and Patty, a chesnut mare, comprise the huntsman's lot. Black Diamond, Weasel, and Big Ben are ridden by the whipper-in.

The V. W. H. has been notoriously celebrated for the daring deeds of the masters of the hounds in the field, not merely coming under the denomination of hard riders, as that term is commonly accepted, but who would when stimulated by the probability of hounds beating them, or when a quick cast appeared necessary to secure the glories of a brilliant run, charge fences scarcely practicable. They were the Lords Kintore, Ducie, and Gifford, and the present master, Mr. Croome, who is second to none. It is related of Lord Kintore that on coming to a place that he saw his horse could not clear, he called to a countryman on the other side, saying, " catch my horse," and riding at the fence, tumbled neck and crop over it.

That portion which is denominated the Bradon Country, situated principally on the south of that branch of the Great Western

Railway which passes from Swindon to Cheltenham, is very severe for man and horse, and both must be fit to go, in order to live with hounds when the scent serves, and the soil, which is not generally highly cultivated, being chiefly old turf, is favourable to that most important auxiliary to sport. This district contains many good holding coverts, several of which are on Lord Suffolk's property, and his Lordship being one of the best supporters of the hunt preserves most scrupulously. Lydiard Park, Lord Bolingbroke's estate, is also within the district, and his cordial influence contributes to the good cause. It is impossible to conceive anything of the kind more imposing or more suggestive of the poetry of venatic pastime than the stately woods in Oakley Park. In the centre there is a spacious plain, from which ten broad well-kept rides radiate through majestic timber tress, producing an admirable effect. This is a chosen and delightful situation for ladies who honour the hunting-field with their presence; indeed, it seems to have been designed on purpose, as it affords most favourable opportunities for those who prefer the indulgence of a carriage to horse-exercise to witness all the excitements

of the chase, as the gallant hounds make the woods echo with their melody, and drive their chase across the rides from one division of the covert to another. Appropriate basket-carriages and well-appointed park-phaetons, graced by fair devotees of the chaste goddess, whenever the hounds draw these woods, are always present, and the *récherche* luncheons with which the carriages are usually well stored afford acceptable refreshment to the assembled sportsmen. These woods being so near to the kennel, and full of foxes, are convenient for cub-hunting, but, unfortunately, the soil is light, and holds but an indifferent scent.

On the 29th of January the sun was obscured by a dense fog, and our London friends declare it was as thick as pea-soup. Nevertheless, the hounds kept their appointment at Seven Bridges, but did not commence operations till twelve o'clock. Tadpole Gorse, belonging to Lord Redesdale, and in the care of Mr. Watley, who uses every effort to preserve foxes, was a failure. Berrytown Brake, also Water Eaton Copse, occasioned similar disappointments, and the only alternative was to trot off three miles and

more to a new stick covert made by those warm supporters of hunting, Mr. Ruck, of Castle Hill, and Mr. John Archer, of Lush Hill, adjoining a small natural covert, which was considered not of sufficient size to hold foxes. Here the wild animal was quickly on his legs, and as quickly followed by the hounds to the Marston Lane, where there was a momentary check; speedily rectified, the hounds went at a good pace to the Maisey Hampton Brook, to Mr. Bee's of Broadmore Hill, leaving Furzey Hill to the right, where the fox was chased by a sheepdog—a forward cast, however, recovered the line in the Kempsford Road, from thence to the Fairford Road, and across it, pointing for Quenington Coneygre, but it was up wind, which the fox not approving of, he returned over the foiled ground and was lost; scent very indifferent. Several other coverts were drawn blank, but the greater portion of the field having left, Mr. Croome, in consideration of a coursing club who were to meet on the following day, desisted from drawing nearer to the scene of their operations, and took the hounds home.

At Badminton there are some very ancient paintings by Wootton, containing portraits

of several of the Duke of Beaufort's ancestors, together with horses, hounds, and men engaged in the exciting movements of the chase as it was conducted in the olden times. The precise date I do not know, but conjecture the pictures must refer to scenes between 1730 and 1740. There are likewise four in Mr. Croome's dining-room, so very similar in style as to lead to the supposition that they were executed by the same artist, and therefore that they refer to a similar date. Those at Mr. Croome's are representations of the predecessors of the late Sir Richard Pulestone, Bart., of Emral, in Flintshire, whose daughter is married to Mr. Croome, and whose family have been so highly celebrated through many generations for their love of the chase and the excellence of their hounds. The unique fashion of dress, the peculiar style of the horses, all of which are represented with snaffle bridles, and the varied character of the hounds, convey pleasing examples of hunting, when our forefathers breakfasted by candlelight, and dined about the time when a modern pack of hounds are tasting their first fox.

The morning of the 31st of January broke

gloriously, with a light breeze from the south. It seemed that all the perfections of a hunting atmosphere were concentrated, and hearts beat high with expectation as they proceeded to Minety House, the residence of that excellent sportsman and supporter of foxhunting, Mr. Perry Keene, whose hospitable doors are at all times open to receive his friends. This gentleman's gorse covert and Ravenshurst were drawn blank, but as the hounds were thrown into the Withey Copse Mr. Croome viewed a fine wild fox break away at the further end, and, quickly getting the hounds on his line, they settled well to it, running through Charlton Pond Plantation, in the direction of Stonehill Gate, and, turning to the right, passed the Withey Copse, but did not enter it, and on to Mrs. Keene's woods, when a short check occurred, in consequence of the fox being headed; the time to this point was fifteen minutes, and the pace quite first-rate. A skilful cast overcame the difficulty, and leaving the wood the hounds ran towards Ravenshurst, but the fox disdained to enter it, and took a line over the meadows, where the ditches received seven or eight of the most ardent in pursuit. The next point

was Somerford Common, but before reaching that place the depth of the ground and the extraordinary pace had told its tale, except with a choice few. Mr. Bowly was the leader up to this point, when jumping the fence into the common Mr. Croome and Mr. Browne were abreast with him, and the huntsman, who, from the appearance of his horse, had come to grief, was close up. Unfortunately at this point two foxes were on foot, the body of the hounds following the fresh one, and four couples staying behind with the hunted one. The pace was again first-rate to the Withey Copse, through it to Charlton Pond, Stonehill Wood, and along the meadows at a racing pace without any check, but the fox just saved himself by entering a drain under the Malmesbury road. Time from find to finish one hour and fifteen minutes. The field was squandered somewhat conspicuously during the run, and certain marks on the backs of divers gentlemen sportsmen proclaimed their having indulged in eccentricities with their native soil. Miss Tayleur, a young lady celebrated for her exquisite skill in equestrianism, enthusiastically fond of hunting, rode superlatively well throughout the

day, and was one of the first up when the fox went to ground. The remarkable coolness and fortitude she displayed when guiding her horse over the intricate fences which presented themselves was the *acm * of perfection.

CHAPTER XX.

THE EARL OF YARBOROUGH'S HOUNDS AND
COUNTRY.

Lincolnshire is essentially the land of the foxhound. There are properties and conditions connected with localities which are particularly suitable to the habits and constitutions of various kinds of animals, conducive to the production of them in the full vigour of health, and the realisation of their most valuable qualities. It is scarcely necessary to illustrate this with a multitude of examples, so prominently are they placed before us in the numerous varieties of sheep and cattle. Every tyro in agricultural pursuits is thoroughly apprised of the results that would follow, in a very few generations, the removal of sheep identified with a vale to the rarefied atmosphere and the rude inclement blasts of the mountains; or, reversing

the order, the consignment of the mountain sheep to the luxuriant pasture fields of the valleys, where their offspring would in a few years increase in bulk, and totally change in character. Naturalists have instructed us that we are indebted to the effects of climate, to a vast extent, for the production of the numerous varieties of the canine species, and I am quite contented to be one of their disciples. It is well known that the foxhound very rapidly degenerates if removed to the enervating atmosphere of eastern or southern climes, and I think I shall be able to show that Lincolnshire has produced a vast proportion of the most valuable specimens of the foxhound. Here, however, let me observe, I do not endeavour to establish an argument that foxhounds of the highest character are not reared in many other countries ; but then to keep them up to that standard recourse is constantly had to sires from some of the celebrated resources of this district, and the more those sires are identified with the original stock, in other words, with those whose genealogy is traceable in direct lines to the great celebrities of olden times, the more valuable will they prove for

the purposes required of them. With these introductory remarks I will proceed with a history of the Brocklesby Hounds, which will, I think, confirm my observations, premising, however, that I include the Duke of Rutland's, Lord Henry Bentinck's, the Honourable George Fitzwilliam's, and Mr. Foljambe's, or the Grove kennels, as being in the county of Lincoln or the immediate neighbourhood.

Tradition assigns to the noble house of Brocklesby the uninterrupted mastership of the hounds during the unprecedented term of one hundred and sixty years. Without any conclusive evidence as to the precise date of commencement, there is proof of their having been in the family from the year 1713, in the form of a document drawn on the 20th of April, in the aforesaid year, by which memorandum "it is agreed between Sir John Tyrwhitt, of Stanfield, Robert Vyner, Esq., and Charles Pelham, Esq., that the foxhounds now kept by Sir John Tyrwhitt, and the hounds now kept by the said Mr. Pelham, shall be joined in one pack, and each of them, the said Sir John Tyrwhitt, Robert Vyner, and Charles Pelham, to have

an equal share and interest in the said hounds." This curious and somewhat complicated agreement specifies certain months in the year during which the respective parties are to keep at their proper costs and charges sixteen couples of the said hounds, the huntsman, boy, and three horses. The agreement was made for a term of five years, but there appears no evidence of the arrangements after that date. The manuscript lists of hounds commence in 1746, at which period they were in the sole possession of Mr. Pelham. By the kindness of Lord Yarborough in allowing me a perusal of these ancient relics I am enabled to make a vast number of extracts and observations which give an interesting insight of the progress that has been made in an establishment which justly ranks as the oldest in the kingdom. The remarkable order in which these books have been kept, together with the numerous marginal remarks interspersed over a lengthened period of time, explanatory of occurrences connected with these and other hounds, with their treatment and characters occasionally described, affords a pleasing example of the value of little notes, however

unimportant some of them may appear at the time, but yet abounding with valuable information to a future generation. The first year enumerates five couples of brood bitches; and a hound called Ringwood, supposed to have been introduced from the Duke of Richmond's kennels, was their most approved partner; likewise Streamer, from Lord Awforth's (qy., Lord Althorp), and Bellman, from the Duke of Grafton's; information which assures us that those were fashionable kennels of the age. The breeding department was not extensive in those early days, and about six couples appear to have been about the average. Appertaining to 1752, but in the handwriting of W. Smith, there is a marginal note in compliment to Rattler, "a very famous hound in the late Mr. Pelham's time and my grandfather's. He had a painting of him very badly executed." This identifies Mr. Pelham as the master, and the grandfather of William Smith as the huntsman in the aforesaid year. There is a note, in 1764, that the distemper first made its appearance in these kennels, when they lost thirteen couples of hounds. Four years after this Mr. Meynell's Hounds came into

repute, and from that time till 1805 much blood from his kennels was introduced.

The name of Tom Smith is singularly identified with foxhunting qualifications of the highest distinction. There was Mr. Thomas Assheton Smith, whose renown has a world wide fame. Another Mr. Thomas Smith gained great celebrity as a gentleman huntsman in the Hambleton, Craven, and Pytchley countries, and there was also a Mr. Tom Smith of Worcestershire origin, who though never a master of hounds was a capital judge of hunting, a fine horseman, and possessed of wonderfully clear conceptions of the qualifications of a hunter, which in his quaint language he was wont to express with great volubility; but the Tom Smiths of whom I have now to speak were in connection with the Brocklesby Hunt.

Coeval with the confederacy which was former in the year 1713, between Mr. Pelham, Sir John Tyrwhitt, and Mr. Vyner, it is recorded that Thomas Smith, the great grandfather of the present generation, was their huntsman, and he entered his son, whose name was also Thomas, as whipper-in ere he had seen fifteen summers, to whom the paternal

instincts descended, and in due time the office which his father had held before him. He performed his duties during the long term of fifty-nine years, and rode hard at the advanced age of seventy-two, although during the last two years his son William generally hunted the hounds. In the year 1816, "Lord Yarborough having given up the management of the hounds to his son, the Honourable Charles Anderson Pelham, he wished the huntsman to give up to his son." This was an occasion for one of those kind, considerate, and graceful recognitions for which the noble family of Yarborough have been ever distinguished. His Lordship granted to his old servant full pay for life, and presented him with a silver cup in testimony of long and faithful servitude. The presentation, too, was conducted in a manner most impressive. The noble donor, be it observed, was the first Lord Yarborough. The cup was conveyed to the old huntsman's house by the footman and presented by Master Pelham, afterwards second Earl of Yarborough, his lordship's grandson, then a little boy only seven years of age, seated on his pony. His Lordship riding about on the

lawn superintending the interesting proceeding. The heart must be cold that cannot sympathize with the happy feelings that prevailed.

The following impressive inscription appears on the cup :—

“The gift of Lord Yarborough to his huntsman, Mr. Thomas Smith, after having been more than fifty years in his service, made as an acknowledgment of that indefatigable and unremitting attention to the business of his vocation, which may be recommended for a pattern to those who succeed him and can never be surpassed.

1816.”

Such significant sentences, can scarcely fail to have powerful and happy effects on all the worthy veteran’s descendants however remote the generations.

On the other side is an admirable quotation from Somerville :—

“With silence lead thy many coloured hounds,
In all their beauty’s pride. See how they range!
Dispersed, how busily this way and that
They cross, examining with curious nose
Each likely haunt—let all be hush’d,
No clamour loud, no frantic joy be heard
Lest the wild hound run gadding o’er the plain
Untractable, nor heed thy chiding voice.”

With such admirable precepts, his son William Smith continued at his post, gaining

favour and esteem, and improving the pack under the masterly directions of Lord Yarborough, who died in the year 1823; but more emphatically under his successor the first Earl, whose nautical affections raised him to distinction as commodore of the Royal Yacht Club. But a sad accident befel poor Smith on the 11th of April, 1845, when hunting near Barnoldby le Beck. The hounds had checked, and Ranter hit the scent, William Smith in the act of cheering him, coming to a small fence with a trifling ditch on the off side, riding carelessly at it, his horse put his foot into the ditch, fell, pitching his rider on his head and injuring the spine. He was conveyed to the house of Mr. Richard Naiseby, at Barnoldby le Beck, under whose friendly roof he expired four days after the sad event. On ground given by Mr. Naiseby an obelisk has been erected to his memory with the following pathetic and appropriate inscription written by Sir Charles Anderson, Baronet :—

This stone the name of William Smith records,
The huntsman skilled of two of Yarbro's lords;
Honest and true of temper, well approved,
By "Master" honoured, and by "Field" beloved.
No need to paint that well-known form and face,

Which, stamp'd on memory, find a welcome place,
In the warm heart that knew him they recall
By covert side, in cottage, farm, or hall
(When friend meets friend beside the yule logs' glow,
And kindly feelings swell and overflow)
Those happy days when on the breeze were borne
Will's tuneful holla and his echoing horn
Cheering his gallant pack so stout and bold,
A perfect horseman as e'er crossed the wold.
And as the vision fades, too bright to last,
They sigh to think those days are now "the past;"
No need of aught for such as knew him best
To keep in mind their valued friend "at rest;"
But for posterity this stone shall tell
The fatal spot where midst his friends he fell,
And let them ponder, both in Faith and Fear,
How frail the tenure of man's sojourn here.

This sad event left an opening for his son William Smith, whose first engagement unconnected with the Brocklesby establishment was with the late Lord Lonsdale, by whom he was appointed first whip in 1837, and he remained with those hounds till they were sold in 1842. His promotion as huntsman to the Pytchley followed, and at the expiration of two seasons he held a similar engagement with the East Kent, but left that country to return to the place of his birth at the death of his father. During the following two seasons he occupied that ostensible post, when he entered upon a farm on the Brocklesby

estate, which, in the spring of 1863, he relinquished to resume his duties at the kennels, and I am led to understand a fine lot of horses have been purchased for his riding.

After an interval of two generations the name of Tom Smith again took a prominent position—a brother of the last named William. His first essay from under the paternal roof was with Lord Middleton as second whipper-in when travelling northward into Bonnie Scotland, the happy instincts of merry John Walker produced the best effects. An engagement with Mr. Musters, followed by three seasons with Mr. Foljambe, qualified him to take the horn with the Perthshire, at that time under the management of Mr. Grant, brother to the highly talented artist whose splendid delineations of man and horse will proclaim to future generations the perfections of the days we live in. Two seasons afterwards they were given up; so he took a voyage to the Emerald Isle, first to hunt the Carlow and make friends with the Patlanders, upon which Lord Shannon secured his services for three seasons, when the hounds being sold to Lord Southampton, Tom Smith accompanied them for one season.

This afforded him an opportunity to hang up his horn for a time and contemplate past events; when he returned to Lord Southampton; but was called away by the late Lord Yarborough with whom he remained six seasons till the spring of 1862, at which period Tocock was appointed as hereafter mentioned.

This little history identifies the Smiths as huntsmen to the Brocklesby hounds, with an interval of only one brief season, the unprecedented term of more than a century and a half. The restoration of the family, I feel assured I may venture to state, is greatly to the satisfaction of Lord Yarborough and the tenantry, with all of whom reminiscences of the past are observed with pride and the utmost veneration and respect. It is now most earnestly to be hoped that very many more generations will in due time spring up and sustain the fame their forefathers have so emphatically established. It is related that Doctor Buckland, when once on a visit at Brocklesby, observing the high character of the tenantry, asked Lord Yarborough where he got all his good tenants from. "Oh," said his lordship "I don't get them, I breed

them all." The same may be applied to the huntsmen, and without making invidious comparisons it would be extremely difficult to find another example where the same associations exist between landlord, tenants, hounds, and huntsmen, as they do at Brocklesby.

A hound called Wonder is in the list for 1770, remarkable for the conspicuous position assigned to him in a painting by Stubbs of the two Tom Smiths, father and son, worthy veterans of the couples who had for so very many years enlivened the then heathery wastes of Lincolnshire with their cheery voices, and whose descendants have till the present date held similar appointments, the five having their likenesses portrayed on canvass, affording pleasing retrospections of the past. The costume of the ancient huntsman and whipper-in is remarkably consistent with modern fashion. Long-waisted, easy fitting coats, with black boots, quite in accordance with present tastes, and yet in these antique representations their date is unmistakably delineated.

For several years nothing very remarkable appears to have happened; the Brocklesby seem to have kept on in the even tenor of

their ways with becoming punctuality and good taste, obtaining from the Belvoir kennels divers acquisitions of fresh sires, and also from Lords Thanet's and Gainsborough's, Mr. Smith's, and Mr. Mundy's. It was not the custom of that period on all occasions to name the produce with the initial letter of one of the parents, neither do I find it to have been adopted till 1816. Ringwood, a wonderful celebrity of his day, first saw the light in 1788. A son of Neptune and Vestal, his pedigree traces principally through Brocklesby lineage, with occasional introductions from Mr. Meynell's, Lord Fitzwilliam's, and Mr. Noel's. His portrait, also by Stubbs, adorns the parlour in the huntsman's house, and his numerous progeny occupy very distinguished places in the kennel lists of subsequent years. Redrose, his sister, also contributed her part in providing future generations of celebrity. She was the dam of Ranter, with Dover for her partner, and he is thus recorded in the huntsman's notes for the year 1790:—"Ranter, a very famous hound and stallion; his blood has always been reputed for being as stout or stouter than any other in England,

in all kennels, particularly by Mr. Meynell and J. Evans of Burton." Subsequent notes confirm the excellencies of the family in very many instances, especially in Trimmer, Tarquin, and Marplot.

A new era commenced in the year 1816, as previously mentioned, "Lord Yarborough having given up the management of the hounds to his son, the Hon. Charles Anderson Pelham, he wished the huntsman to give up to his son," so that although the mastership continued in the same family, as did likewise the duties of the huntsman, fresh and youthful vigour was introduced, and the great improvements that had been from time to time in progress now made still more rapid strides. About this period the good effects of crosses from Mr. Osbaldeston's kennels became apparent; to be vastly increased, however, as the rare qualities of his hounds were tested. In after years his Rambler, Rocket's son, was in great favour, and well he might be, knowing that Rocket was the produce of Rallywood and Baroness, daughter of Lord Vernon's Raymond and Bonnybell, which the Squire obtained when he purchased Lord Vernon's pack at

the time he began hunting the Derbyshire side of the Atherstone country.

Prodigal, another of the Rockets, was also in good odour; but there was still a greater prize in store in old Furrier, presented to Lord Yarborough by Mr. Osbaldeston in 1829. This good hound met with a sad accident, which incapacitated him for duty. With the kindest considerations he was indulged with his liberty to range about the kennels, and was unfortunately scalded over the loins by part of a pail of broth being accidentally thrown over him. The last of his family was one litter at Brocklesby in 1830, and they have contributed faithfully to transmit his worth to the present generation. There is an extraordinary amount of this blood flowing in the veins of the Rallywoods, so justly celebrated in the Duke of Rutland's kennels. Observations clearly establish it as a principle that to breed hounds successfully, great care must be preserved in selecting parents, especially sires, descended from families as faultless as possible. It is not merely the size, symmetry, and appearance of individual hounds, or their excellence in work, that will afford any acceptable guarantee of their

transmitting their own type and good qualities to their progeny, unless they inherit the excellencies required in them from ancestors free from imperfections through several generations. It is sometimes rather difficult to arrive at these facts, but the research is worth any amount of reasonable trouble in the increased value of a pack so constituted. I will, however, bring to notice a very important illustration in the case of the three brothers bred by Lord Henry Bentinck, Contest, Craftsman, and Comrade, whose full pedigrees I had not previously been able to trace. They were sons of Comus and Sanguine, as described in my account of Lord Henry Bentinck's pack. Comus was the issue of Mr. Foljambe's Herald and Crazy. Herald a son of Mr. Osbaldeston's Ranter and Harpy. Ranter, son of Furrier. Sanguine, daughter of Mr. Foljambe's Sparkler and his Skilful. Sparkler, son of Mr. Osbaldeston's Ranter and Mr. Foljambe's Starlight. In this instance there is a very direct and near alliance, through Ranter with Furrier, on both sides.

Before proceeding further with the genealogy of the Brocklesby Hounds, I must "try back" to a little history of the proceedings

connected with the observances of early dates. In former days it was the practice to breed hounds all the year round, and previous to the present century it was not a very uncommon event for young puppies to have to contend against the inclemencies of Christmas. About the commencement of the present century it was customary to enter the young hounds in April or May, before they were rounded, and it was not a very unusual occurrence to flog every one of them, apparently for the purpose of initiating them in the mysteries of whipcord, not for having committed faults, but peradventure as a caution. These severities, however, seem to have been discontinued, as more lenient treatment was found to produce better effects. In the event of frosts hounds were subjected to the process of dressing, and gunpowder formed a component part of the application. Bleeding was a periodical performance, and commonly resorted to on the appearance of any disorder; the quantities of physic in the form of salts, nitre, sulphur, antimony, and jalap incorporated with the food amounted to something quite marvellous. To correct these effects, as I imagine, the hounds were indulged

by feeding them rather frequently with dry meal. What the constitutions of hounds and horses were composed of in those days it is difficult to conceive, when I find fourteen drachms of aloes and one drachm of jalap prescribed as one dose for a horse; or, for a delicate horse, one drachm of aloes and six drachms of rhubarb. The distemper, in some years, seems to have committed considerable ravages; but, at a somewhat early date, the following very lucid, observant, and appropriate remark of the huntsman occurs:—"As it appears in so many forms, of course it requires as many modes of treatment." Modern science and practice confirm this most emphatically.

A most important and significant mandate was issued by Lord Yarborough to his huntsman in 1839 in his Lordship's determination "to reduce the size of his largest hounds to twenty-three inches, and the bitches not to be below twenty-one." Three couples only, however, were drafted, so that the pack must have been remarkably level. The taste for over-sized hounds was evidently on the wane, and I believe there could not have existed a greater mistake than that of our forefathers

in approving of it. Medium-sized hounds, provided they possess muscular powers, with good legs and feet, possess so very many advantages over their more gigantic brethren that it is difficult to imagine what can induce any man of practical experience and observation to patronise them. There is, however, one difficulty to overcome. In breeding for dogs of the required moderate standard the other sex very generally prove too small, and I am free to confess, without individualising, that I have observed in several kennels of repute that the young females do not generally evince quite sufficient bone, size, and power, and that in this respect they are not equal to their older sisterhood. As a remedy for this, in large establishments with abundance of walks, the alternative might be effectually adopted by breeding from certain hounds of large stature exclusively for the purpose of rearing the females; the dog-puppies would by such a system be too big, and must therefore be drafted, but they may be always readily disposed of to foreigners.

During the last twenty years the principal sources from whence new crosses have been procured in these kennels have been from the

Dukes of Beaufort's and Rutland's, Lords Fitzwilliam's and Henry Bentinck's, Sir Tatton Sykes's, Sir Richard Sutton's, and Mr. Foljambe's; while their own Rallywood has deservedly come into very great force. The pack for the season 1862 and '63, commenced with forty-nine couples and a half—one hound eight years old, three couples and a half seven years old, a similar number six years old, five couples five years old, ten couples four years old, seven couples three years old, seven and a half couples two years old, and twelve and a half couples entered the last autumn. Leveller, from the late Mr. T. A. Smith's establishment, son of his Bobadil and Levity, is a compact, useful hound, but further of his lineage I cannot speak. Gambler, a light-coloured, reddish grey-pied hound, in his sixth season, is descended from the Duke of Rutland's Guider and Purity. He has beautiful shoulders and rare legs. His sire is a son of Mr. Drake's Duster; Purity, daughter of Pleader and Relish; Pleader, son of Ruler and Prudence. Relish introduces a cross from Lord Fitzwilliam's kennels through his Roman. Feudal, a very good-looking black, white, and tan hound, exhibits great family likeness

of his father, Ottoman, and Beauty claims him as her son. Ottoman, with a vast amount of Brocklesby lineage, goes back to Mr. Osbaldeston's Ranter on one side, and to Mr. Foljambe's Albion and Mr. Osbaldeston's Rocket and Bachelor on the other. Helpmate, a Rufford introduction, has not been successful in the way of progeny, and his brother, Harbinger, is intended to supply his place. He is a very straight, powerful, yet cleanly-made hound. Skilful, their dam, was bred by Lord Henry Bentinck, and was a daughter of his Contest. Nathan, a very clever hound in every respect, with splendid thighs and a very sensible head, is a son of Nettler and Constant, and is another in which the blood of Mr. Foljambe's Albion is conspicuous. Royalty, also descended from Mr. Foljambe's Albion through Ruler, his sire, is of the Orator family on his mother's side. He has fine muscular loins, with plenty of length, and is of a very useful stamp. Lexicon, with everything in his appearance to recommend him, is a son of Leveller, the first hound on the list, and Primrose, daughter of Pleader and Relish. He is of a beautiful colour, with capital shoulders, very

straight on his legs, but I fancy he is a little above the standard of twenty-three inches. Vaulter, son of Villager and Brajela, a black and white hound, with a clever intelligent head and rare loins, is in every respect a very smart hound ; this is another descendant from Mr. Foljambe's kennels, through his Roister. Nimrod, although only in his second season, has been promoted to paternal honours, and derives his parentage from Nettler and Governess ; an attractive rich black, white and tan, is one of his distinguishing properties, and he is very straight, full of power, with great depth, and short on his legs ; altogether on rather a large scale. Here ends the list of the stud hounds. In their fifth season, Painter and Paramount, sons of Villager and Parody, are evidently something above the standard twenty years ago prescribed. Partner, descended from Ruler and Promise, in his fourth season, is a nice stamp of hound, and Remus, of South Wold extraction, much resembles him. Gallant and Granville, in their third season, the representatives of Gambler and Fury, have vast character ; their colours are antagonistic, the one being a yellow pied hound, and the other black, white,

and tan. Layman, brother to Lexicon, is of a fine useful stamp, and Rifler has capital loins, with good bone in all the essential points. Sportsman and Shiner represent Mr. Foljambe's credit, and in no degree do they detract from the celebrity of his kennel. Orthodox is of a colour, black, white, and tan, significant with his name, and quite of the size to merit my fancy—wiry, active, and very smart. Freeman, of this season's entry, is a worthy representative of Sir Watkin Wynn's Romeo, and Fencer, son of Nailor and Fortune; he has famous legs and feet to recommend him. Hannibal, another descendant from the aforesaid Romeo, is a very level nice young hound. Norval, Striver, Vagrant, Wellington, and Woldsman, especially the two last, are, in their turn, calculated to sustain the high character of the kennel in the male line. Hostess, in her eighth season, is a fine old specimen of her race, and has a very stylish daughter, Handmaid, of a lightish black, white, and tan, with beautiful neck and shoulders, and very good over the loins. Governess has three couples of sons and daughters to do her honour. Needful, very clever, with a truly graceful pleasing coun-

tenance, has but one son in the list, Norval, but most probably next season's entry will add to the number. Charity, daughter of the Belvoir Comus and Flourish, is worthy of especial compliment: great size for her sex, nearly twenty-three inches high, of a good black, white, and tan, shows a deal of character, and is the mother of Wellington and Woldsman. Careful, her sister, of a light hare-pied colour, has great pretensions; as have also Notable, Prattler, and Barmaid. To Heroine I must devote an especial amount of praise for famous legs and feet; plenty of length to indicate speed, with rare thighs, and of a very good colour. Nightshade has just had her little family removed from her parental cares, not therefore showing to advantage, but she is of great size, with plenty of depth. Venus, Vestris, and Vocal, daughters of Villager and Frolic; Courtly, Freedom, and Fearless, all clever, conclude most of the bitches which have contributed to the future forces of the Brocklesby kennels. As a pack they evince very great power, and to increase it would be the means of introducing coarseness, as I have no doubt that there are a few rather exceeding the standard

of three-and-twenty inches. The very fine rich black, white, and tan which so greatly prevail contribute vastly to their appearance; with nice shoulders they have rare thighs—points which, I need scarcely repeat, go to combine a most important construction.

It is not only the pack that becomes a subject of admiration but in due keeping is the stud of horses. Numbering about thirty, a very fair complement for the purpose, it would be difficult to find a similar number, having performed the duties in a hunting establishment through such a trying season as the past, looking so remarkably fresh and free from injuries, as under the careful management of Hughes, the stud groom, these nags do. Indeed, the splendid lustre of their coats is quite striking, and not to be exceeded in the month of June. Some explanation may be given to this; they have no debilitating grass in the summer to waste their constitutions. Kept during the term of respite in large roomy loose boxes, thoroughly ventilated, but shaded from the sun, and, consequently, free from the obnoxious intrusions of flies, every opportunity is secured of obtaining that important element of the horse—condition. Then, again, they are all

well-bred animals, and many thorough bred ; some reared on the estate, most of the others purchased from the tenants, who have been accustomed to breed horses of high pretensions from time immemorial. I presume the example was set them by Mr. Pelham, the founder of the pack, who, simultaneously with his engagement with Sir John Tyrwhitt and Mr. R. Vyner, bred the celebrated mare called Brocklesby Betty, who ran so gamely when distance was the test of fame. The name of Mr. Marris, as the breeder of Peter Simple, is well known ; and Dictator, a recent Derby candidate and favourite, was bred by Mr. Hadley, handy to Brocklesby. In the park, too, there are mementoes of races in ancient posts, especially a huge one, which history relates was appropriated to the convenience of the clerk of the scales. How many years have elapsed since the races were discontinued I have no idea ; for I believe none of the Lords Yarborough kept race horses. In the hunting stables the Countess of Yarborough's four take precedence, as, I may add, they do in the field. A more splendid creature than *Brilliant* it is impossible to conceive ; a beautiful dark bay, almost

inclining to a brown, he is the *beau ideal* of a hunter for the purpose he is so happily selected to perform, though her ladyship is rather disposed to show favouritism for Blue-cap, because he is rather the faster of the two; but if hounds were to go too fast for Lady Yarborough on either, it would be a matter of no great difficulty to say where the field would be. Crinoline and Rocket are also remarkably perfect. Of Lord Yarborough's horses it would not be an easy task to make a selection, so wonderfully are they alike in character, symmetry, action, good breeding, and that *sine qua non* of perfection — good manners. A description of one will serve for them all, so I will take Flatcatcher as an example; a dark brown horse having the name of his sire, nearly, if not quite thorough bred, fifteen hands three inches high, with fine oblique shoulders, a rare mover, with speed equal to any pace hounds can run. A very handsome grey mare, whose name I have forgotten, is quite of the same stamp; and of the Dragon's perfection I can speak practically, his lordship having kindly favoured me with a mount on him.

Long as this magnificent establishment has

been in existence, it could not have attained to the great perfection it has done but by the masterly and unfailing guidance that has presided over it for many years. Though it takes a length of time to bring a pack of hounds to a high state of perfection, relaxation of management would very soon have occasioned a reverse; but that has never happened. The character of the pack had no doubt attained very great fame under the management of the Lord Yarborough who, as previously mentioned, resigned it to his son in 1816; but it has been vastly raised since then, through sources which I have already attempted, too inadequately I fear, to exemplify. The late Earl Yarborough most unfortunately suffered from ill-health for several years previous to his decease, and had not been able to accompany his pack in the field for more than five years prior to his death. But, with a wonderful turn for business matters, and a most devoted attention to all events connected with his vast estates, most especially the welfare and happiness of his tenantry, the seeds were most probably sown which so sadly shortened his life. Yet the hunting establishment was maintained in its full vigour, and with the

same munificent liberality as when his lordship was able to participate in the sport he so generously provided for others, and those mostly consisting of his tenants. In Lincolnshire he was significantly styled “Yarborough the Good,” and in respectful veneration for his memory a memorial gateway is about to be erected, which is to comprise a statue of the late Earl placed on an archway across the public highway, where it enters Brocklesby Park from the Brigg road. This will be done by subscription of the tenantry and gentlemen of the county, but principally by the former, at a cost of £2,000. The noble Earl, now master of the hounds, has only been in possession of them a little more than twelve months, but that brief period has been quite sufficient to confirm the ever-cherished hope that he would inherit that love for the chase for which his ancestors for so many generations have been so highly famed. But yet there is another and a most pleasing cause for rejoicing in the fond anticipation that the prosperity of the Brocklesby Hunt will continue to increase; the Countess of Yarborough is as fond of hunting as her husband. Her ladyship's equestrian accomplishments in the

hunting-field are of the highest order, and far and fast must hounds run if, when riding Brilliant or Bluecap, they can gain an advantage. And here, again, the tenantry and gentlemen of the hunt are offering a suitable mark of respect; having obtained permission from the Earl of Yarborough to present the Countess of Yarborough with an equestrian portrait of herself, in testimony of her many virtues.

With such imperative claims on the courteous co-operation of every person interested in the welfare of the county, it is not more than moral and social rectitude demands that every support should be rendered to enable Lord Yarborough to carry out his wishes; but more emphatically still, that any person should exist so heartless as to frustrate his Lordship's efforts, or in the least degree to annoy him, would be perfectly inconceivable.

The season of 1862 and '63 commenced under the auspices of a new huntsman, Phillip Tocock, whose initiations in the mysteries of the noble science commenced upwards of twenty years since in the Vine country, at the time when Mr. Fellowes was the master; he then had two years' probation

in the Emerald Isle with the Kildare Fox-hounds, but returned to his native land to do duty eight seasons for that steady good sportsman the late Colonel Sumner, in Surrey. One year terminated his engagement with the Burton Hounds, after which he entered the service of the late Earl Yarborough as first whipper-in, where he doubled the period of his previous employment. He was then promoted by Colonel Sumner as huntsman to the pack with which he had so long been whipper-in, and after four seasons' experience of the responsibilities appertaining to his calling in that department, he entered into his present engagement, which terminated at the end of the first year, when he was succeeded by William Smith, as previously mentioned.

The sociabilities and kindly feelings that exist among the members of the Brocklesby Hunt have been long known to fame and highly eulogised in all hunting circles however distant; but great as my anticipations were, they were much exceeded by the realities. Hospitalities, too, are offered with no sparing hand; they emanate at Brocklesby Hall, and flow freely through every house on

that extensive estate; yet more than that, through every house within the precincts of the hunt, and, I may add, in the good county of Lincoln. On the first occasion of my meeting the hounds at Wootton, Mr. Field Nicholson appeared at the door of his house, prepared to proffer the jumping powder to all, whether friends or strangers. And then again at Wootton, sherry and biscuits, ale and bread and cheese, were in abundant supply, and there was a large field ready to do justice to Mr. Farraday's kind offerings. In the course of my peregrinations I have seen fields of all kinds, from the aristocratic meetings with the Quorn to those of the most provincial packs, but I must do the members of this hunt the justice to declare I never saw a field so well appointed in every respect as regards the appropriate turn out of a sportsman. Well mounted, in the true acceptation of the term, horses looking fit, men well dressed, but without any affectation of being "got up," which is a style as repugnant to good taste as is the reverse —slovenliness. There was, indeed, one little omission that I noticed "they don't wear knee ties." An unhappy-looking individual,

however, an exception, a very heavy weight, did not impress me with the idea of his belonging to the order; his garments hung loose about him, appearing as if he had taken a bath, or got otherwise soaked.

A fox found at Yarborough Camp afforded a remarkably quick burst; the hounds, carrying a wonderfully good head, ran him to Melton Ross, where I expect he was headed at the railway, and hunting him cleverly to Elsham, he was lost. I quite think he went to ground. After a welcome lunch at Mr. Graburn's, drew for a second fox in Marshall's covert, and hunted him through Elsham, to which place the pace was good; on to Saxby, where the scent failed. It was delightful to observe the quickness with which hounds turned on the line, not being unfairly pressed upon by horsemen, for, however ambitious, they do give hounds a chance to distinguish themselves.

Cabourn Village served as an introduction to another part of the country, and a very different one to what I had previously seen. The general impression exists that Lincolnshire is a perfectly flat country, but that is not quite correct. In the vicinity of

Cabourn there is a considerable proportion of hill, exceedingly punishing for horses when there is a scent in wet seasons. The soil is light, nearly all arable, and in rainy weather it is extremely deep. Drew Rothwell Gorse and found a fox that required very little pressing to induce him to break, and the hounds ran him at a telling pace fifteen minutes, when a temporary check occurred, and while trying to recover the scent the fox ran among the hounds in a most unaccountable manner, and was killed ; whether it was the hunted fox or a fresh one I cannot determine. Proceeded to draw Badger Hills, from whence a fox went away at an extraordinary pace, and Lady Yarborough, having a very good start, saw this run in perfection. It was, however, but of short duration ; a check occurred, and one, if not a brace, of fresh foxes crossing the line, took the hounds to the plantations by the Swiss Cottage, where they divided, and after persevering upwards of an hour they were stopped and taken home.

I felt but one cause for regret in connection with my visit to Brocklesby, and that was at being obliged to leave. I never

on any other occasion witnessed so much cordiality and kind courtesy as that which was maintained between the members of the Hunt, nearly all of whom are opulent tenants on the estate. And how have these cordialities and courtesies been promoted? The reply is obvious. By the admirable examples set from generation to generation by the noble owners of the soil.

PRESENTATION OF HER PORTRAIT TO THE COUNTESS OF YARBOROUGH.

It has previously been mentioned that Mr. Francis Grant was engaged by the members of the hunt and Lord Yarborough's tenants to place on canvass a likeness of Lady Yarborough in appropriate costume, mounted on her favourite hunter, Brilliant. This pleasing work of art having been completed, the ceremony of presenting it to her ladyship took place at Brocklesby Hall on the 23rd of December. The many acts of kindness and affability which have invariably distinguished Lady Yarborough having gained for herself the universal respect and esteem of all who have had the good fortune to be placed within reach of its influential range, justly raised a

desire among them to proclaim their gratitude by means of some proper token of respectful admiration. For this purpose a committee was formed, with Mr. T. Brook as chairman, Mr. J. R. Kirkham secretary, and Mr. W. J. Graburn treasurer, and the funds required to defray the charge were at once subscribed.

An opportunity of presenting this appropriate tribute was rendered the more interesting by the hounds meeting in the park on the appointed day, and a large and aristocratic circle of Lord Yarborough's friends being guests at Brocklesby gave additional *éclat* to the ceremony. Among these were the Duke of St. Albans, Lady Diana Beauclerk, Lord George Beauclerk, Lord Listowel, the Hon. Hugh and Mrs. Hare, the Ladies Adelaide and Eleanor Hare, the Hon. Ralph Hare, Lord and Lady Proby, and Col. and Mrs. Astley. At the appointed hour the gentlemen connected with the hunt, in number about two hundred, assembled in hunting attire, and, forming into procession, marched to the entrance hall, and were thence conducted to the drawing room where the presentation took place, when the following address was read by Mr. Kirkham :—

“To the Right Honourable the Countess of Yarborough.

“ May it please your Ladyship: We, the tenants of the Earl of Yarborough and gentlemen of the Brocklesby Hunt, have the pleasure to meet at this ancient seat of the Pelhams, to request your acceptance of an equestrian portrait of your ladyship painted by an artist eminent in the profession. We reflect with delight on the day when, from the sister isle, came the bride of the representative of the noble family of Pelham—a family so famed for generosity and kindness, and which receives additional lustre from those amiable qualities which endear your ladyship equally to both rich and poor. We hope your ladyship will accept this portrait in acknowledgment of our appreciation of your condescending kindness and affability which have been so constantly shown to us in the field as well as to all in the neighbourhood. We profit by the occasion to tender to the Earl of Yarborough our grateful acknowledgments for the handsome manner in which it pleases his lordship gratuitously to hunt the country, and for carrying out so nobly the many examples of his illustrious ances-

tors, which cement the confidence so long existing between landlord and tenant. That your ladyship may long continue to enjoy health and happiness, and by your presence in the field enhance the pleasures of the chase, is the earnest and heartfelt wish of all who join in presenting this tribute of respect and esteem.

(Signed) "THOMAS BROOKS.

"On behalf of the Committee.

"Brocklesby, Dec. 23, 1863."

Mr. T. Brooks, on requesting that the portrait should be unveiled, said he had been honoured by the committee and subscribers to the fund to request her ladyship's acceptance of this portrait. He did not think this the occasion for him to occupy the time with a long speech, but had simply to say that it was his earnest wish that her ladyship and her family might long live to enjoy what they had so cordially and respectfully presented.

The Countess of Yarborough, on rising, was most enthusiastically cheered, and thus expressed her appreciation of the pleasing gift: "Gentlemen, I am afraid words will fail

me to express all I feel this morning; indeed, it would be impossible for me to thank you sufficiently for the handsome picture which you have this day presented to me. I shall always value it as a work of art; but it is still dearer to me as a token of the love and good feeling existing between us. I wish also to take this opportunity of thanking you, one and all, for the great kindness I have always experienced since I came into this country, both in the hunting-field and elsewhere. The kind way in which you allude to my dear husband is very gratifying to me—I am sure his lordship's great desire is to live among his tenants and his friends upon terms of amity and good will—and I trust that the confidence and mutual good feeling which has existed for so many generations between the owners and occupiers of the Brocklesby estate will be long continued by our children's children. I again thank you for your great kindness to me, and trust we may all live long and happily.” Bursts of applause attended her ladyship's conclusion, and hearty cheers were given for the youthful Lord Worsley.

Attired in a hunting dress, Lady Yarborough

—a most perfect exemplification of an accomplished horsewoman—is represented seated on Brilliant, a hunter whose beautiful symmetry and perfections render him peculiarly adapted for such a charming distinction. A couple of favourite hounds, Gambler and Charity, are also introduced, adding spirit to the scene. The former is a light hare-pied hound of beautiful symmetry, a son of the Duke of Rutland's Guider and Purity; while Charity is a daughter of the Duke of Rutland's Comus and Flourish. They are both descendants of Rallywood, a hound so well-known to fame in the legends of the Brocklesby kennels, and very similar strains of blood connect them through their ancestors.

The presentation of the portrait concluded, the company were ushered into the dining room, in which luncheon was awaiting them. This afforded an opportunity for appropriate speeches and toasts, but as time was on the wing, and the hounds on parade in front of the mansion, the addresses were necessarily brief. The most graceful and emphatic was that of the Duke of St. Albans, who, in proposing “The Health of the Countess of Yarborough,” said he would offer no apology

where none was required, and in proposing the health of her ladyship, their hostess, he would simply say that words could not describe, nor skill convey in a painting the living original. It was difficult to speak of another, and especially of a lady, before her face, and to bestow a just tribute of praise, lest it might be considered flattery; and therefore he would follow the excellent example which had been set of being as brief as possible—seeing that the hounds were to meet at a certain hour—and would conclude by expressing a hope that they would give the toast a hearty reception, and a wish that the men of Rochdale had been there to witness what had been done at Brocklesby that day.

Lady Yarborough, in reply, thanked the Duke of St. Albans for the kind manner in which he had proposed her health, and the gentlemen for the hearty manner in which they had responded to it, assuring them it was one of the happiest days of her life, which would never be forgotten.

The “Health of Lord Yarborough” had been previously given, and on returning thanks his lordship proposed the “Health of

the Committee," which was responded to by Mr. Brooks and Mr. Kirkham.

The pack being in readiness, and a large concourse from the neighbouring villages having assembled, mounted on Brilliant, Lady Yarborough, attended by his lordship and the numerous guests visiting at the hall, appeared in the park, where, in one of the coverts, a fox was soon found; but he was not inclined to make a wide range, nor was there scent enough to press him. Crossing the park two or three times and down the fine grass rides, resembling racecourses, passing the Mausoleum and over the Limber road, he retraced his steps to the park, where he was finally lost; and thus ended a day which will be long remembered in Lincolnshire with delight.

THE END.

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